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WORKS

OF

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LECTURES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

ROMANS.

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.& LL.D.

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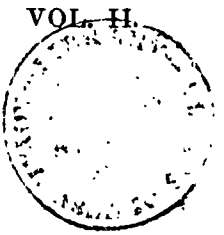

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LECTURES ON THE ROMANS.

LECTURE XXVI.

ROMANS, v, 12—14.

" Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

After these lengthened preliminary remarks on the doctrine of original sin, we now proceed to the exposition of the verses of this remarkable passage in detail.

Ver. 12. The death which entered into the world by sin, includes in it a great deal more than that temporal death, to which in common language the term is restricted. It is very true that death, in the ordinary sense of the word, formed part of the punishment laid upon our first parents and their posterity. But there was a sentence of death executed on the very day of the transgression—" In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—And yet Adam survived his expulsion from Paradise several hundred years; and the way in which the truth of the threatening

was accomplished, was by the infliction of spiritual death. By the fall he lost that, which Christ by his salvation restores to our species. If a title to eternal life hereafter, and spiritual life here, came by Christ—it is because they went away from us by Adam. He on that day lost the light of the divine countenance. A sense of God's favour died away from his heart; and it was this which cheered and sustained him in all the joys of existence. Hope, that sunshine of the soul, took its departure; and left the blackness of desolation behind it. The death in trespasses and sins, began with the commission of the first sin. It was then that trust gave place to terror. It was then that jealousy of God put out from the bosom its wonted joy in God. It was then that the righteousness of the soul expired, because it was left without a principle and without an object—alike unable to recover the acceptance that had been lost; and unwilling for the labours of a service, when all love for the master had been extinguished, among the fears and the suspicions and the chilling alienation of guilt. This was a death which took place long before the dissolution of the body; and when the body falls into dust, this is a death which the soul carries with it into the place of its separate habitation. The literal death is only a stepping-stone to the full accomplishment of that sentence —the operation of which began on Adam, with the very first hour of his history as a sinner. It was then that he became dead unto God; and that his soul was driven into exile, from all the joys and communications of the divine life—just as surely

as in person, he was exiled from the scenes of loveliness and delight that were in the garden of paradise. It is this character of the soul which forms its own punishment in the place of condemnation; and here in every unregenerate bosom, is the germ of that, which ministers to the second death on the other side of the grave all its agony and all its bitterness.

It is a matter of experience, as we have already amply endeavoured to demonstrate, that this death of the soul has passed upon all men, just as surely and as universally as the dissolution of the body. There is one species of life or of vivacity, that remains to us—vivacity to the things of sense, so that they form the world in which we move, and to the objects of which alone it is that we are feelingly alive. There is another species of life or of vivacity that is extinguished — vivacity to the things of faith, so as that God and eternity and the unseen realities of another world have no more power to excite or to interest us, than if we were inanimate beings. It is the reawakening of this vivacity in the soul which is stated in the Bible, as an event equally miraculous with a resurrection from literal death. It takes effect upon us on our truly receiving Christ. He who believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. He who believeth hath passed from death unto life—a death, on the one hand, in which we may be most profoundly immersed, at the very time that we are bustling with eager and intense desire among this world's affairs; and a life, on the other hand, to which we may be raised long before our bodies

have dissolved—a life which begins with conversion; which matures and makes progress along the course of our sanctification; which, so far from being arrested by the death of the body, is thereby released into a scene of enlargement, and will at length, by the reunion which takes place on the day of judgment, be brought to that state of final accommodation, in which all its powers and all its sensibilities will be for ever consecrated to the full enjoyment of God.

Think then, ye hearers, whether in this sense of the terms, you are indeed dead or alive. You may surely be sensible, if God be practically seen and recognised by you; or if, stopping short at the visions of carnality, you only move in a pictured world of atheism. Then know that Christ is knocking at the door of every sleeper's heart, for the purpose of awakening him. He employs the hope and the offer of His gospel as the instruments of reviving you; and, should you close with the proposition of being reconciled through Him unto God, He will cause the breath of another life to animate your powers—and, instead of living as you have done heretofore, without God, you will know what it is, under the light of His countenance and the influences of His Spirit, to live with Him in the world.

This death then, both temporal and spiritual, is the judicial sentence inflicted on all who have incurred it. On whatever subject we see it taking effect, we may infer of him, that he is reckoned a sinner and dealt with accordingly. And if we see that, in point of fact, this death hath passed upon

all men, it proves that in the estimation of the Judge all men have sinned.

Ver. 13. This sentence, it may be remarked, was in full operation anterior to the promulgation of the Mosaic law. The death of the soul in trespasses and sins, was as much the doom and the characteristic of nature in the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, as it is now; and that more visible mortality, which sweeps successive generations from the face of the world, was as relentless and universal in its ravages. The men of that period were treated as men under guilt, and all shared in the very sentence that was passed and fulfilled on our one common progenitor. Death was dealt out to them all, and just because sin was reckoned to them all. And yet sin is not imputed where there is no law. Under what law then was it, that, between the creation and the delivery of the commandments from mount Sinai, men were counted as transgressors? Not the Jewish law which then did not exist; but some prior law which extended over the whole world, and involved all the men of it in one common condemnation.

The truth is, that Paul never lost sight of the main purpose of his argument, which was to reduce Jews and Gentiles to the same footing; and bring the former to a thankful acquiescence in that same salvation, of which he welcomed the latter to an equal participation. The Jews were constantly building a superiority to themselves upon their law. They fancied that they stood out, in point of immunity and favour with God, from all the rest of the species—in virtue of the relationship

they held with Abraham as their father. The apostle reasons with them on their prior relationship to Adam as their father—a relationship through which sin, and death the sentence of sin, found a like way among all the families of the earth; and from which Abraham himself, the immediate founder of their own nation, was not exempted. He thus confounds the distinction, on which the children of Israel were disposed to hold out against the gospel of Jesus Christ; and, demonstrating all to be under the virulence of that disease which issued in sin and death from the common fountain-head of our species, he demonstrates all to be in need of the same remedy, and befitting patients for the same healing application.

Ver. 14. If death reigned from Adam to Moses, it could not be in the shape of a penalty for the violations of the Mosaic law; and yet it was in the shape of a penalty rendered to men for the violation of some law or other. What could that law be? What but either the law of the heart, or the representative law made with Adam, by which he stood to God in the relation of federal head of all his posterity—by which, had he kept it, he would have transmitted the right which he had earned for himself as a privilege won and wrought for by him on behalf of his descendants; but by which, as he broke it, he brought down a forfeiture on his own head, and in which, all who spring from him do share. In Adam all died, because in Adam all are held to have sinned. Such is the economy under which we sit, an economy which we shall not stop any further to explain or vindicate at present,

having already endeavoured to acquit God of all alleged severity against you on the score of your guilt and helplessness by nature—and that, by directing your eye to the amplitude of the compensations which are so fully provided and so freely offered to you in the gospel.

Death reigned universally from Adam to Moses; and the term 'even' directs our attention to a class more unlikely than the others to be made partakers of this fatality, and therefore serving still more effectually to mark how far the effect of Adam's sin was carried among the great human family. The death of those who arrived at maturity may have been ascribed to their own wilful transgressions against the law of conscience. Each personally sinned against the light of a known duty. Each transgressed the prohibition of an inward voice, just as effectually as Adam transgressed the prohibition of that voice which was uttered from without. And each therefore may have been conceived to die in the way of retribution for his own personal and particular offences. But to preclude this inference altogether, and to make manifest the law of Adam incurring the guilt of a sin unto death for himself and for all his posterity, we see that this penalty of death is laid even upon those, who could not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression—who could not, by any voluntary and deliberate choice, put forth their hand to any actual violation—or, in other words, as is generally understood—Death reigned even over infants, who were incapable of sinning as Adam did, when appetite prevailed in its contest with the sense of

known duty, and with the fear of known and threatened consequences. There is no internal war of the soul in the heart of an unconscious babe; and yet it too may share in that sad penalty of death which was pronounced upon Adam, and falls without exception on his posterity of all classes and all ages.

In our former illustrations we have attempted to show, how the elements of the corrupt nature may all enter into the composition of infancy—how as surely, as the ferocity of the tiger exists as an embryo disposition at the very first breath of the animal, so surely may the unfailing germ of a sinful tendency lie incorporated in the heart of a babe among the other ingredients of its moral nature; and which only needs time for growth, that it may break out into the development of actual and committed sin—that thus, in fact, every child is born in spiritual death; and brings into the world with him that character of the soul, which, if not regenerated and made anew, will be his character through time and his curse in eternity—So that though this native sinfulness may not be apparent, till it come forth at a more advanced period in sinful performance—yet it has just as firm and solid an existence in the frame of an infant, as the tendency to bring forth sour fruit in a particular tree, was a tendency which adhered to the sapling many years before the period of bearing, and was even infused into the very seed or acorn from which it has germinated. But should the spiritual death of infants not be palpable, the literal death which forms part of the sentence is

exemplified on many of them; and, just as the order to burn thorns and briers would be carried into effect on the youngest as well as on the oldest specimens of a produce so obnoxious, so death goes forth the executioner of an unsparing sentence upon all ages—and the babe of a week old, sinless though he may be in respect of his outward history, yet, with a soul tainted by corruption and a body on which the curse of mortality may at any time be realised, does he share alike with the hoary offender in that sentence, of which, as it respects the infant, no other account can be given than that, as in Adam he sinned so in Adam he dies.

'Who is the figure of him that was to come.' Adam is here stated to be the figure of Jesus Christ; and this statement completes our information respecting the whole amount of the mischief entailed upon his posterity. Experience tells us that from him we inherit a depraved tendency to evil. The moral sense tells us, that we justly incur guilt for the sins of our corrupt nature. But neither the one nor the other, do we think, tells us that we are responsible for the sin done by Adam in paradise. The information however, which we cannot get from either of these two sources, we get from Scripture—when it announces to us that Adam is the figure of Christ; and that what of righteousness we derive from the one, we derive of guilt and condemnation from the other. Now we know, that it is not enough to derive from Christ the cancelment of all the debt that we have already incurred—neither is it enough to derive from Him a new and a holy nature, under the workings of

which, we aspire after a heavenly character, and at length reach it. In the midst of all our aspirings, there is a mingling of sin so long as we are compassed about with these vile bodies; and as God will not look upon us with regard, unless we offer ourselves to Him in a righteousness that is worthy of that regard, we need to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us, just as much as we need His sanctifying grace to be infused into us. And accordingly we are told in express terms, that the merit of Christ's good actions is ascribed to us; and, if Adam be the figure of Christ, this benefit that we obtain from the latter has a counterpart bane that has descended upon us from the former —or, in other words, the demerit of Adam's bad action is ascribed to us. And as, under the second economy, we are held to be rewardable for the obedience of the one—so, to complete the figurative resemblance, we, under the first economy, are held to be responsible for the disobedience of the other.

This part of the doctrine of original sin we hold to be matter of pure revelation—a portion of God's jurisprudence, the whole rationale of which we cannot comprehend; but not, as we have endeavoured to show, in any way at war with tenderness and love to the children of men. For, leaving the two cases of heathenism and infancy to Himself, what have we who are neither heathen nor infants to complain of? Is it that our estate by nature has been left so heavily entailed by our first progenitor—then there is a surety provided, to the benefit of which we are all most abundantly welcome; and by the acceptance of which, the estate

is disburdened, and fully restored to all the value it ever had. I am glad to have been a sharer in all the miseries of Adam's rebellion, as that is the very circumstance which has marked me out as a welcome sharer in all the privileges of Christ's mediation. I am glad to have incurred all the forfeitures which were laid upon Adam and his degenerate offspring, as this is the very thing which has brought me within the scope of a most glorious amnesty and a most ample restoration. I will not quarrel with the doctrine of original sin, but hold it a kindness to have it laid before me—as to me it is the very finger-post which points my way of access and of triumph, to that righteousness which is unto all and upon all who believe. It is a singular dealing of God, that He should rate me for another's sin, and evinces His ways to be not as men's ways; but I will not complain of it, as I have a most secure and honourable refuge in another dealing of God's, equally singular, but in which it is my chiefest interest and will at length be my most exalted felicity to acquiesce—even that He should reward me for another's obedience; and that, instead of looking to me as I am in myself, or looking to me as I am in Adam, He should look unto me as I am in Christ, and lavish upon me all that benignity which He feels towards His only beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

In the three verses that follow, we have such a parallel drawn between the evil entailed upon us by the first Adam, and the good purchased and procured for us by the second Adam, as to evince that there is something more than compensation—

but such an overbalance of blessedness provided to us by the gospel, as may well serve to reconcile us to the whole of this wondrous administration.—Ver. 15–17. "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ."

LECTURE XXVII.

ROMANS, v, 15—19.

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

We do feel that there is a considerable difficulty in this short passage; and the following is the only explanation that we are able to give of it. You will observe that in the 14th verse, the effect of Adam's sin in bringing death upon his posterity, is demonstrated by this circumstance that the sentence had full execution, even upon those who had not in their own persons sinned as he did. Death reigned even over them; and it made Adam to be the figure of Christ, that, what the one brought upon mankind by his disobedience, the other by his obedience did away.

But Christ did more than do away the sentence which lay upon mankind, because of the sin of Adam being imputed to them. This and no other sentence was all that could be inflicted on infants,

or those who had not sinned actually. But, in addition to the guilt that we have by inheritance, there is also a guilt which all who live a few years in the world incur by practice. The one offence of Adam landed us in guilt; but the many offences of the heart and life of us all, have wofully accumulated that guilt: And we stand in need, not merely of as much grace as might redeem us from the forfeiture that was passed on the whole human family in consequence of the transgression of their first parent, but also of as much new grace as might redeem us from the curse and the condemnation of our own iniquities—as might redeem us not merely from the debt that has been entailed upon us, but from the additional debt that has been incurred by us.

And thus it is, that not as the offence so also is the gift. For the gift by Christ compensates for more evil, than the offence by Adam has entailed. Through that one offence the penalty of death passed upon many—even upon all whom Adam represented. But the grace of God, and the gift which emanated therefrom and was won for us by the one man Jesus Christ, greatly exceeds in its amount the recalment of this penalty from the many whom Christ represented. The condemnation we derive from Adam was passed upon us because of his one offence. The free gift of justification we receive from Christ, not merely reverses that condition of guilt in which Adam has placed us, but that still more aggravated condition of guilt in which we have been placed by the multitude of our own offences. We obtain not only

justification from the guilt of Adam's one offence, but justification from the guilt of our own many offences. Such was the virulent mischief even of the one offence, that, through it and it alone, even when separated from all actual guilt as in the case of infants, death reigned in the world. There was more grace needed however, than would suffice merely to counteract this virulence—for greatly had it been aggravated by the abundance of actual iniquity among men; and for this there was an abundance, or as it might have been translated, a surplus of grace provided, so that while the effect of Adam's single offence was to make death reign, greatly must the power of the restorative administered by the second Adam, exceed the malignity of the sin that has been transmitted to us by the first Adam—inasmuch as it heals not merely the hereditary, but all the superinduced diseases of our spiritual constitution; and causes those over whom death reigned, solely on account of Adam's guilt, to reign in life though for their own guilt as well as Adam's they had rightfully to die.

This is all the length at which we can penetrate into this passage. We see affirmed in it the superiority of that good which Christ has done for us, over that evil which Adam has entailed upon us. We see in it enough to stop the mouth of any gainsayer, who complains that he has been made chargeable for a guilt which he never contracted —for we there see announced to us, not merely release from this one charge, but from all the additional charges which by our own wilful disobedience we have brought upon ourselves. The heir

of a burdened property who curses the memory of his father and complains of the weight and hardship of the mortgages he has left behind him, ought in all justice to be appeased—when his father's friend, moved by regard to his family, not only offers to liquidate the debts that were transmitted to him by inheritance, but also the perhaps heavier debts of his own extravagance and folly. From the mouth of a wilful and obstinate sinner, may we often hear the reproach of God for the imputation of Adam's sin to his blameless and unoffending posterity; and were he indeed a blameless individual who was so dealt with, there might be reason for the outcry of felt and fancied injustice. But, seeing that in hardened impiety or at least in careless indifference he spends his days, living without God in the world and accumulating voluntarily upon his own head the very guilt against which he protests so loudly when laid upon him by the misconduct of another—this ought at least to mitigate a little the severity of his invective; and it ought wholly to disarm and to turn it, when a covering so ample is stretched forth, if he will only have it, both for the guilt at which he murmurs and for the guilt of his own misdoings. Nor has he any right to protest against the share that has been assigned to him in the doom of Adam's disobedience, when, wilfully as he has aggravated that doom upon himself, there is a grace held out to him, and a gift by grace, which so nobly overpasses all the misery of man's unregenerate nature, and all its condemnation.

Perhaps there is a great deal more in this passage

than we have been able to bring out of it. It is likely enough that the apostle may have had in his mind, the state of the redeemed when they are made to reign in life by Jesus Christ—as contrasted with what the state of man would have been had Adam persisted in innocency, and bequeathed all the privileges of innocence to a pure and untainted posterity. In this latter case, our species would have kept their place in God's unfallen creation, and maintained that position in the scale of order and dignity which was at first assigned to them; and, though lower than the angels, would at least have shone with an unpolluted though a humbler glory, and have either remained upon earth, or perhaps have been transplanted to heaven, with the insignia of all those virtues which they had kept untainted and entire upon their own characters. Now certain it is, that the redeemed in heaven will be made to recover all that personal worth and accomplishment which was lost by the fall, and, in point of moral lustre, will shine forth at least with all that original brightness in which humanity was formed; and in the songs of their joyful eternity, will there be ingredients of transport and of grateful emotion, which, but for a Redeemer to wash them from their sins in His blood, could never have been felt; and, what perhaps is more than all, they are invested with an order of merit which no prowess of archangel could ever win—they are clothed with a righteousness, purer than those heavens which are not clean in the sight of infinite and unspotted holiness—they are seen in the face of Him who takes precedency over all that is created; and, besides

being admitted into the honour of that more special and intimate relationship which subsists between the divine Messiah, and those who are the fruit and travail of his soul, it is indeed a wondrous distinction, that the Son of God, by descending to the fellowship of our nature, has ennobled and brought up the nature of man to a pre-eminence so singularly glorious.

Verses 18, 19. 'Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

The three last verses state the disparity between the two Adams, in respect of the amount of good and evil conveyed by them. The two before us state the similarity between them, in respect of the mode of conveyance of this good and this evil. They contain in fact the strength of the argument for the imputation of Adam's sin. As the condemnation of Adam comes to us, even so does the justification by Christ come to us. Now we know that the merit of the Saviour is ascribed to us—else no atonement for the past, and no renovation of heart or of life that is ever exemplified in this world for the future, will suffice for our acceptance with God. Even so then must the demerit of Adam have been ascribed to us. The analogy affirmed in these verses leads irresistibly to this conclusion. The judgment that we are guilty, is transferred to us from the actual guilt of the one

representative—even as the judgment that we are righteous, is transferred to us from the actual righteousness of the other representative. We are sinners in virtue of one man's disobedience, independently of our own personal sins; and we are righteous in virtue of another's obedience, independently of our own personal qualifications. We do not say but that through Adam we become personally sinful—inheriting as we do his corrupt nature. Neither do we say but that through Christ we become personally holy—deriving out of His fulness, the very graces which adorned His own character. But, as it is at best a tainted holiness that we have on this side of death, we must have something more than it in which to appear before God; and the righteousness of Christ reckoned unto us and rewarded in us, is that something. The something which corresponds to this in Adam, is his guilt reckoned unto us and punished in us—so that, to complete the analogy, as from him we get the infusion of his depravity, so from him also do we get the imputation of his demerit.

One may suppose from the 18th verse, that the number who are justified in Christ is equal to the number who are condemned in Adam; and that this comprehends the whole human race. But by the term 'all,' we are merely to understand, all on the one hand who are in that relation to Adam, which infers the descent of his guilt upon them—and that is certainly the whole family of mankind; and thus 'all' on the other hand, who are in that relation to Christ which infers the descent of His righteousness upon them—and that is only the

family of believers. As in Adam, it is said, all die—even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But the 'all' does not refer to the same body of people. The first who die in Adam, evidently refer to the whole human race. But the second who live in Christ are restricted by the apostle to those who are Christ's, and will be made alive by Him at His coming. All men have not faith, and all men therefore will not reign in life by Christ Jesus.

For any thing we know, the mediation of Christ may have affected, in a most essential way, the general state of humanity; and, by some mode unexplained and inexplicable, may it have bettered the condition of those who die in infancy, or who die in unreached heathenism; and aggravated the condition of none, but those who bring upon themselves the curse and the severity of a rejected gospel. But the matter which concerns you is, that, unless you receive Christ in time, you will never reign with Him in eternity. You will not be admitted into the number of those all, who, though they comprehend the entire family of believers, do not comprehend any that obey not the gospel; and it is at your peril, if, when the offer of an interest in the righteousness of Christ is placed within your reach, you turn in indifference away from it.

And it is of vital importance for you to know, that the free gift, though it comes not upon you all in the way of absolute conveyance, it at least comes upon you all in the way of offer. It is yours if you will. The offer is unto all and upon all who now hear us—though the thing offered is

only unto all and upon all who believe. We ask each individual among you to isolate himself from the rest of the species—to conceive for a moment that he is the only sinner upon the face of the earth, that none but he stands in need of an atoning sacrifice, and none but he of an everlasting righteousness brought in by another and that might avail for his justification before God. Let him imagine, that for him the one and solitary offender, Christ came on the express errand to seek and to save—that for him He poured out His soul unto the death—that for him the costly apparatus of redemption was raised—that for him and for him alone, the Bible was written; and a messenger from heaven sent to entreat that he will enter into reconciliation with God, through that way of mediatorship which God in His love had devised, for the express accommodation of this single wanderer, who had strayed, an outcast and an alien from the habitations of the unfallen: And that it now turns upon his own choice, whether he will abide among the paths of destruction, or be readmitted to all the honours and felicities of the place from which he had departed. There is nothing surely wanting to complete the warrant of such an individual, for entering into hope and happiness; and yet, ye hearers, it is positively not more complete than the warrant which each and which all of you have at this moment. To you, individually to you, God is holding out this gift for your acceptance—you is He beseeching to come again into friendship with Him. With you is He expostulating the cause of your life and your death; and bidding you

choose between the welcome offer of the one, and the sure alternative of the other if the offer is rejected. He is now parleying the matter with every hearer; and just as effectually, as if that hearer were the only creature in the world, to whom the errand of redemption was at all applicable. There is nothing in the multitude of hearers by whom you are surrounded, that should at all deaden the point of its sure and specific application to yourself. The message of the gospel does not suffer, in respect of its appropriateness to you, by the ranging abroad of its calls and its entreaties over the face of the whole congregation. The commission is to preach the gospel to *every;* and surely that is the same with preaching the gospel to *each.* It does not become less pointedly personal in its invitation, by its being made more widely diffusive. The dispersion of the gospel embassy over the face of the whole world, does not abate, by one single iota, either the loudness or the urgency of the knock which it is making at your door. This is a property which no extension of the message can ever dissipate. It cannot be shipped off, either in whole or in part, by the missionary vessel which carries the news and the offers of salvation to other lands. Your minister speaks with no less authority, though thousands and thousands more are preaching at the same moment along with him. Your bible carries no less emphatic intimation to you, though bibles are circulating by millions over the mighty amplitudes of population that are on every side of you. God, through the medium of these conveyances, is holding out as distinct an overture to you, and

pledging Himself to as distinct a fulfilment, as if you were the only sinner He had to deal with; and whether He beseeches you to be reconciled, or bids you come unto Christ on the faith that you will not be cast out, or invites you weary and heavy laden to cast your burden upon Him and He will sustain it, or sets forth to you a propitiation and tells you that your reliance upon its efficacy is all that is needed to make it effectual to you—Be very sure that all this is addrest as especially to yourself, as if you heard it face to face by the lips of a special messenger from heaven—that God is bringing Himself as near, as if He named you by a voice from the skies—So that if you, arrested by all this power and closeness of application, shall venture your case on the calls and the promises of the gospel, there is not one call that will not be followed up, nor one promise that will not be fully and perfectly accomplished.

The thing offered in this passage is, that you shall be instated in the righteousness of Christ. Let me crave your attention to the substantial meaning and effect of such an overture. The technicals of theology are so familiar to the ear, that they fail to arouse the understanding; and the thinking principle often lies in complete dormancy, while there is a kind of indolent satisfaction felt by the mind, at the utterance and the cadency of sounds to which it has been long accustomed. The proposal that Christ's righteousness shall become your righteousness in such a way, as that you will be honoured and rewarded and loved and dealt with by God, just, as you would have

been, had this righteousness been yielded in your own person and by your own performances—this, ye hearers, is the very jet and essence of the gospel; and could we only prevail on you to entertain the wondrous proposal and to close with it, like a man translated from beggary to some exalted order of merit that had been won for him by another, might you instantly be clothed in the glories of a high and splendid investiture—recognised by God Himself, and by all the subject ranks of His administration, as the occupiers of a dignity and a constitutional standing, to which all the homage due to worth and excellence and lofty prospects may rightfully be paid. You would become kings and priests unto God; and, like many of those sublimities of nature where the noblest effects often spring from the simplest of causes, is this princely elevation of guilty and degraded man brought about by the simple credence which he renders to the testimony of God respecting His Son—on which it is that he passes from death unto life, and according to his faith so is it done unto him.

This is the way of being translated into a condition of righteousness with God, and there is no other. We are aware of the tendency of nature to try another; and that, in the obstinate spirit of legality, it is her constant forth-putting to establish a righteousness of her own—an object, in the prosecution of which, she is ever sure, either to dissipate her strength in a fatigue that is unavailing, or at length to sink down into the repose of a formality that is altogether lifeless and unfruitful. This positively is not the way. The way is to lay your confident

hold on the merit of Christ as your plea of acceptance with God. It is to take your determined stand on the basis of His obedience, all the rewards and all the reckonings of which are held out to you in the gospel. It is to go at once to the justification that Christ hath wrought out for all who believe in Him; and, entering upon that region which is lighted up by the Sun of righteousness, there to offer yourself to the notice of the Divinity, not in that tiny lustre which is created by the feeble sparks of your own kindling, but in that full irradiation which is caught from the beams of a luminary so glorious. God, to see to you with complacency, must see you not as shining in any native splendour of your own; but as shone upon by the splendour of Him who is full of grace and truth. It is only when surrounded with this element, that a holy God can regard you with complacency; and, to complete the triumphs of the gospel administration, it is only when breathing in this atmosphere, that you inhale the delights of an affectionate and confiding piety—that the soul breaks forth in the full triumph of her own emancipated powers, on the career of devoted and aspiring obedience—that life and happiness shed the very air of heaven around a believer's heart—and make the service of God, before a drudgery, its most congenial employment—Evincing, that, as to be in Christ is to have no condemnation, so to be in Christ is to become a new creature with whom all old things are done away, and all things have become new.

LECTURE XXVIII.

ROMANS, v, 20, 21.

Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

It it good to mark, how, at certain intervals in the course of the apostle's argument, there is often the recurrence of some particular term, by which there may not only be evinced some reigning principle, which it is good for the reader to seize upon, but by which he may obtain a more connected view of the whole demonstration. In some former verses, the apostle insists on the mischief that was entailed upon our species, by the one offence of one individual—a mischief which fell even upon the heads of those who in their own persons violated no express commandment, as did Adam; and he now intimates to us the effect which an authoritative law, subsequently imposed upon mankind, had in turning the one offence into many offences, or in making the offence to abound—so that the power which restores us, must not only be of force enough to counteract the guilt of Adam's transgression, but be of force to counteract the guilt of all those innumerable actual transgressions, which are committed by those who sin against the known enactments of a rightfully proclaimed authority.

It sounds harsh to say of God, that He brought in a law, for the direct purpose of adding to the

quantity of sin in the world; and it would soften this harshness, could we make it out to be the meaning of the apostle, not that there was any such design on the part of God—but simply that such was the effect of the law having been introduced among men. Moreover, the law entered, not with the intention by the Lawgiver of causing sin to abound, but with the consequence certainly among its subjects that sin did more abound. The law entered, and so sin became more abundant. In the Gospels we often read of a particular thing having been done, that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by some old prophet. It looks strange for the Saviour, to have gone out of His way, on purpose to bring about an adjustment of this kind, between the prophet in the Old Testament and the historian in the New, and therefore some translate the phrase thus—such a thing was done, and so was fulfilled what had been said by one of the prophets. In like manner, and to save the conclusion that God is the wilful author of sin, we would so render the passage before us—as that the law was brought in, not with the previous view of making sin abound, but only with this as the subsequent effect—'Moreover the law entered and thus sin did abound.'

But it has also been alleged respecting the sense of this passage, that the law has made sin to abound, not by acting as a stimulant to sin, but merely as the revealer of sin—not that it has made sin more abundantly to exist, but that it has made it more abundantly manifest. It has served as a mirror to set forth the deformity of sin. Paul was covetous,

before he obtained such an apprehension of God's law as to make him feel that it was sinful to be so; but when the law came, sin revived, not that the law made Paul covetous, but made him sensible that, in consequence of being so, he was indeed a sinner. It is not the tendency, say some, to make a man sinful, but to show him to be sinful. It discovers the tinge of guiltiness where no such tinge was seen or suspected before. The effect of the commandment is not to create sin, but to convince of sin; and to make it evident to the conscience, that it is indeed exceedingly sinful. And we have no doubt, that this is one great purpose which has been served by the entering in of the law. It has shed a much stronger light on that contrast or diversity, which obtains between the character of God and the character of man. It has given a more plentiful demonstration of human guilt and human ungodliness. It has brought home with greater effect upon the conscience that great initiatory lesson—the learning of which is of such importance in Christianity, that the law which furnishes this lesson has been called a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. And this is certainly a most valuable purpose that is accomplished by the law. The application of an even rule to any line or surface, may not create the inequalities; but it will make known the inequalities. And, in like manner, whether or not the law is any way the cause of those crooked deviations from the even rule of rectitude which so abound in the character of man, it certainly is the discoverer of those deviations; and makes known to those, who are

acquainted with the exceeding length and breadth and constancy of its obligations, how much more iniquities abound in the world, than men of unenlightened conscience and no moral delicacy are at all sensible of.

At the same time, we do think that the law has done more than reveal sin to the conscience. It has positively added to the amount and the aggravation of sin upon the character. It has laid a heavier responsibility on those to whom it made known its enactments; and, on the principle of "to whom much is given of them shall much be required," has a deeper guilt been incurred by those transgressors who do sin in the face of clear and impressive remonstrances from a distinct law, than by those who do it ignorantly and in unbelief. "Father, forgive them," says the Saviour, "for they know not what they do." The man who lives under the light of a proclaimed commandment, has no benefit from such an intercession. They sin with their eyes open; and after having fought a pitched, and a determined, and perhaps a long sustained battle, with a conscience well informed. They may do the very same things and no more, than he who has nothing but the feeble guidance of nature to regulate his footsteps; and yet their sin may abound a hundred-fold, and that just because the law has entered with its precepts and its requisitions among them. And beside all this, we do further think, that the law may cause sin actually to abound in the world—not merely by investing forbidden crimes with a deeper hue of sinfulness than they would otherwise have had, but by posi-

tively and substantially deepening the atrocity of these crimes, and adding to the frequency and the amount of them. This is perhaps an effect unknown, or not easily conceived by those, who possess no tenderness of conscience; and are not feelingly alive to the guilt which attaches, even to the slighter violations of principle and propriety. But give us a man, into whose heart there has entered such a sense of the law, as to feel the discomfort even of a minutest aberration—whose force, or whose delicacy of conscience, are such, that what would bring no compunction into the hearts of other men, is sure to overwhelm his with a conviction of guilt in its darkest imagery, and its most brooding and fearful anticipations—who figures himself to have fallen, and perhaps irrecoverably fallen; and that by a slip, which, giving no concern to the feelings of ordinary mortals, would still leave them in possession of all the complacency and all the conscious uprightness that they ever had, or that they ever care for—We say of such a man, that, if without help and comfort from the gospel, the law, in all the strictness he sees to be in it, is all he has to deal with—he is positively in greater danger from the lesser delinquency into which he has fallen, than the other is from his transgression of tenfold enormity. For to him so sensitive of guilt, it has been a more grievous surrender of principle; and to him so tender of character, has there been the infliction of a sorer and more mortifying wound; and to him so conversant in the sanctions and obligations of righteousness, does it look a more desperate overthrow, that he ever came to have forgotten them; and to him so unhackneyed

in the ways of transgression, will one distinct instance of it, however venial it may have looked to others, look to him as a vile and virulent apostacy. And thus, till the blood of Christ be felt in its cleansing and its peace-speaking power, may the man, from his very scrupulosity, be in hazard of abandoning himself, in utter regardlessness, to the habit of living forthwith without God, even as he now lives without hope in the world. The very exquisiteness of his moral sense, furnishes sin with more frequent opportunities for inflicting upon him the humiliation of a defeat; and, in the agony of that humiliation, may he the more readily be led to give up the contest in despondency; and thus, such is the sad fatality of our condition under the law, that, failing as we are sure to do of a perfect obedience to its requisitions, the more tremblingly alive we are to a sense of its obligations, the greater may be the advantage that sin has for plunging us into total and irretrievable discomfiture—thus turning the law into a provocative of sin, and, through the weakness of our flesh, causing that to abound against which it has passed its most solemn and severe denunciations.

And even after the gospel has come in with its hopes and its assistances—this is a fact in our moral nature which may be turned to most important account, in the great work of our sanctification. There can be no doubt, that, as that work prospers and makes progress, the soul will become more delicately alive to the evil of sin; and so more liable to the paralysing influences of humiliation and discouragement, when sin in however

slight a degree has obtained some advantage over it. Nothing will save it from apostacy, unless, with the growing delicacy of its principles there be also a growing strength of performance—a growing watchfulness among the temptations which beset and may baffle it—a growing jealousy of itself, under the well-founded conviction, that without Christ it can do nothing—a growing habit of dependence upon Him, that He, meeting its faith by a stream of influences and spiritual nourishment out of His fulness, may indeed enable it to do all things. It is when the delicacy of moral and sacred feeling outstrips the efficacy of these practical expedients, that a foundation is laid for distress inconceivable, and perhaps the backslidings of a final and irretrievable apostacy; and hence it is, that, instead of walking in presumptuous security, it is the part of every honest and aspiring Christian, who thinketh that he standeth, to take heed lest he fall; and never ought he, even to the last half-hour of his life, while it is his part to be ever on the alert in working out his salvation—never ought he to work it out in any other way than with fear and trembling.

While therefore we cannot evade the fact, that the promulgation of a law has added to the world's guilt, and so afforded place for this reflection against God, that by a thing of His doing, even the delivery of this law, sin has been aggravated in the character and increased in the amount of it—Yet how completely, we ask you to attend, is the imputed severity of this proceeding, in as far as you at least are concerned, done away, by the express

affirmation of the verse before us—that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. The antidote is an overmatch for the bane; and, virulent as the disease may be, there is a remedy provided, which, is not merely competent for its utter extirpation; but, by the applying of which, there is obtained all the security of friendship with God, and all the joy of moral and spiritual healthfulness. It is indeed a sore tyranny of evil; under which we lie oppressed. Sin is held forth as reigning—as seated on a throne—as fulfilling the will of a sovereign, in accomplishing the work of destruction; for he reigneth unto death, and this is the final effect of his administration. What a wide and what a paramount authority then is he invested with—seeing that the individuals of each generation, and all the generations of the world, are the trophies of his power. One would think that the bodies which we wear might be borne up, even as they are, into heaven; and there have immortality stamped upon them. But no—Sin has gotten an ascendancy over them; and the certainty while, under this, of their sinning, brings along with it the necessity of their dying. There is no other way, it would appear, in which this foul leprosy can be detached from that material constitution, under which we lie cumbered and heavy-laden; and so the law of sin and of death is irreversible. There may from another quarter a good and gracious principle descend upon us, by the operation of which, the sin that dwelleth in these bodies is kept in check, and not suffered to have the dominion. But in the bodies themselves, there is nought but

corruption. "In me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." Its natural tendencies are all away from God and from goodness. Sin may not reign over the whole man, if there has been the accession to him by grace of that influence, under which he is regenerated; but, in that ingredient of the old man which is denominated Flesh—in all that he is by nature, or in all that mere nature ever can make of him, there is unmixed sinfulness: And therefore it is, that, while the great object of contest on earth is to keep nature under subordination to the higher and the better principle that we receive by union with Christ Jesus, the repose of heaven will consist in our having got rid of this enemy by his utter dissolution—in our having been emancipated from that old framework, which so encompassed us about with evil desires and evil tendencies—in our being conclusively delivered of a system, on which Death had to lay his hand and resolve it into dust, ere the soul, translated into a glorious body, could, without impediment and without a struggle, expatiate in the full enlargement of its new and its holy nature.

Meanwhile Death reigns, and reigns universally. It has both a first and a second portion in all who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ; and even with those who do obey, the body is all its own. So that in respect of that more visible and immediate sovereignty, which addresses itself to the eye of the senses, it revels in all the glories of an undivided monarchy. And if Death be the mandate of Sin—if he be the executioner of this despot's

will; and, wherever he is seen to enter, it is upon an errand of subserviency to one in whose hands the power of death is—Then what a universal lordship has he gotten, that not one family on earth is to be found, but has to weep under the bondage of this sore oppressor; and not a man who breathes on the face of our world, however firm his step and proud his attitude, who will not fall in prostrate helplessness under a doom from which there is no escaping. What a voucher for the holiness of God, and for the malignity of that sin which He hateth, that, wherever it exists, Death and Destruction go along with it—that on those men over whom sin prevails, death both temporal and eternal is laid as a penalty; and that to those men with whom sin is present in their vile bodies though it has not the dominion, death comes to release them from the plague—to strip them of their bodies, as they would do of a garment spotted with infection, and cause them to undergo a cleansing process in their sepulchre: And it is indeed a striking testimony to the regal power and state of Sin, that he carries this sore fatality over the whole length and breadth of our species; and, sitting enthroned over the destinies of man, makes universal spoil of our dying nature, and holds it forth as the trophy of his greatness.

The honour of a king is concerned in upholding the integrity of his dominions, and in the keeping up of an unbroken authority over them; and hence may we conclude, from the expression of sin *reigning*, that, if this imply regal power vested in a conscious and intelligent being, there is indeed a busy

and an active interest at work against our species. And taking the Bible for our guide, there is such a being, who is said to have the power of death; and who is styled from the high ascendancy to which he has arisen, the god of this world; and whom we recognise to be he whom we read of as the prince of the power of the air, and as the prince of the power of darkness; and who, seated as he is upon a throne, must feel that his glory is at stake on the perpetuity of that peculiar empire over which he is exalted: And hence the undoubted truth, that the might and the strenuousness and the ambitious desires of one most daring in enterprise, and most subtle in design, and most formidable in power and in resources, are all embarked on the object of our subjugation. The instrument of our overthrow is sin; and the result of it is, that second and everlasting death, the reign of which forms the domain of his rule and monarchy—and, from the very expression of sin reigning, may we infer that a thirst for power, and the dread or the shame of a fallen majesty, are all at work in the heart of one who is busy in the plying of his devices, and most assiduous in the prosecution of them for the purpose of destroying us.

This looks abundantly menacing towards our helpless and degenerate race; but by the side of the expression that sin reigneth unto death, let us point your regards to the counterpart expression of grace reigning unto eternal life. And this, as in the former case, implies something more than a mere personification. It implies a living monarch —one who sits upon a rival throne—and who is in-

tent upon an object, directly and diametrically the reverse of that of his antagonist. In other words, if there be a kingly ambition which is against us, there is a kingly ambition that is also upon our side. If it be the pride of one monarch to enslave our race, it is the dignity of another monarch to deliver us; and the desire of mighty potentates is thus embarked on a contest, the issues of which are death or life to our species. We read of Jesus Christ as a King in Zion, and of His having come to destroy the works of the devil—even of him who has the power of death; and the glory of His character is surely linked with the success of His undertaking; and thus is our lower world the arena, as it were, of a contest, which involves in it, not merely, the future condition of those who live in it—but the renown of mighty combatants, who, arrayed in hostility against each other, are striving for the renown of victory.

Now it is not for the purpose of regaling your imaginations that we thus speak, but for the purpose of assuring and strengthening your faith. We want you to see, how the majesty is as much concerned as the mercy of God, in the work of your Redemption. We want you to feel how manifold the guarantees of your deliverance are, if you will only flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel. We want you to perceive how your safety and the honour of the great Mediator are most thoroughly at one. Do you think, that, warring as He does with the great adversary of human souls, He will ever permit him the triumph of a final victory over those, who, cheered forward by

His own invitation, are now trusting to His grace, and looking onward to the accomplishment of His promises? He hath graven upon an open and indelible record these memorable words, that whosoever believeth in Him shall be saved. Can you figure it then, that, on the great day of the winding up of the gospel economy—Satan will have it in his power to revile either the truth or ability of the Saviour; or to fasten upon an individual who believed in the Son of God, and yet whom the Son of God hath not rescued from the grasp of this destroyer? Jesus Christ hath embarked His own credit upon your salvation. Should any have faith in Him, and yet not be saved, He will not only fail in that which His heart is most assuredly set upon; but He will be foiled in His own enterprise, and that too by a most hateful and hated antagonist. The destruction of one who has faith, were the degradation of Him who is the author and the finisher of faith; and hence an argument for your security in believing—for the perfect repose of that acquiescence, wherewith you may lie down among the promises of the gospel—for keeping firm and fast, that confidence in which you have begun—Seeing that grace has not only set out on a warfare against sin,—but that grace is seated on a throne, and the salvation of those who have been obedient to Heaven's call is essential to the truth of Heaven's voice and the triumph of Heaven's monarchy.

And a similar argument may be drawn from the clause of grace reigning *through righteousness*. It is this which forms the leading peculiarity of the evan-

gelical dispensation. It is a dispensation of mercy no doubt, but not of simple and unaccompanied mercy. It has more upon its aspect and character than the one expression of tenderness. There was compassion in the movement which then took place from Heaven to Earth; but this does not complete the history of the movement. It was compassion towards sinners; and God's righteous abhorrence of sin, was mixed up with the forthgoings of His benevolent desire towards those who had been guilty of it. The boon of reconciliation descended upon the world; but it found its way through a peculiar medium, and that was a medium of righteousness—and, to meet on our part this manifestation of the Godhead, it is not enough that we regard it in the light of mercy and nothing else—it will not be accepted that we rely on the general kindness and good-will of the Deity; but it is altogether indispensable to our safety, that, while we rejoice in His grace, we should receive it as a grace which has come to us through righteousness by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So that the sinner on entering into peace with God, does reverence to the purity of God. And when he draws upon the compassion of the divine nature, he renders homage to the holiness of the divine nature. Did he hold singly upon His compassion—then the truth which stood committed to the fulfilment of its denunciations, and the justice that had been offended by sin, would have been left without provision and without a safeguard. But the great Sacrifice has resolved all these difficulties; and you by depending, not on the general attribute

of mercy, but on the redemption that is through the blood of Jesus Christ, can, consistently with all the honours of the Divinity, obtain the forgiveness of all your trespasses. Out of the way of this consecrated mediatorship, you will never meet the mercy of the Godhead—and in this way you will never miss it.

But such an economy is not only essential to the dignity of the Lawgiver. It serves to complete the security of the sinner. It makes known to him, how God can be just while the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. It enables him to meet without dismay the whole aspect and character of God, in the full expression of all the attributes which belong to Him. It harmonises the sterner with the gentler perfections of that Being, with whom we have to do; and the sinner can now delight himself in the abundance of his peace—when he thinks that the very equity and unchangeableness of the Godhead are now upon his side. It does add to his confidence in the grace of the gospel, when he views it as seated on a throne; and thus, in all its manifestations, holding forth the sovereignty of the Supreme Being. But it adds still more to his confidence, when he views it as grace through righteousness; and thus holding forth the sacredness of the Supreme Being. He then sees no obstruction in the way of its reaching even unto him. The terrors of his guilty conscience give way, when he perceives that the very attributes, which, without an atonement, would have stood leagued in hostility against him—with an atonement, form the best guarantees of his hope and safety. God

now is not only merciful to forgive—He is faithful and just to forgive. He will not draw upon the surety, and upon the debtor both. He will have a full reckoning with guilt; but He will not have more than a full reckoning by exacting both a penalty and a propitiation: And the man who trusts to the propitiation, may be very sure that the penalty will never reach him. The destroying angel, on finding him marked with the blood of Christ, will pass him by; and the agitated sinner who sought in vain for rest to the sole of his foot, so long as the great peace-offering stood unrevealed to his conscience, and the tidings of an accepted sacrifice fell upon his ear without conviction and without efficacy, may, on the moment of his believing in the word of the testimony, feel how firm the transition is which he maketh from death unto life—when, through Him who died the just for the unjust, he now draws near unto God.

It finishes our exposition of this passage, when we point your eye to the great agent in the work of mediation. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, *by Jesus Christ our Lord.* He by His death bore the punishment that you should have borne. He by His obedience won a righteousness, the reckoning and the reward of which are transferred unto you; and you, by giving credit to the good news, are deemed by God as having accepted of all these benefits and will be dealt with accordingly. You cannot trust too simply to the Saviour. You cannot place too strong a reliance on His death as your discharge. You are making the very use of Him that was intended, and do

Him that honour wherewith He is most pleased, when you venture your all upon Him both for time and for eternity. We do not bid you earn a place in heaven. We do not bid you work for your forgiveness. We bid you receive it. We bid you hope for it. And eternal life will be the sure result of your thus receiving and thus hoping. Could we get you truly to rely, we are not afraid of licentiousness. Many see a lurking antinomianism in the doctrine of faith. But where there is a true faith there is no antinomianism. It has its fruit unto holiness here, and then everlasting life hereafter. But do try, ere you embark on that course of new obedience which leadeth to the final abode of holy and happy creatures—do try to have peace in your conscience with God. Do dwell on the simple affirmation which you meet with in the New Testament, of a Saviour who welcomes all sinners, and of a blood which cleanseth from all sin. Do let the terrors and the suspicion of guilt take their departure from your labouring bosom; and then emptied of all that kept God at a distance from you, will there be room for those feelings and those principles which form the rudiments of the new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord. Love will cast out fear. Delight in God will take the place of dismay. The heart emancipated from bondage, will rise freely and gratefully to Him, in all the buoyancy of its new-felt enlargement. It will be found that the legal spirit, with its accompanying sensations of jealousy and disquietude and distrust, that this in fact is the mighty drag which keeps back the only obedience that is at all acceptable—

the obedience of good will. And the faith which we now urge upon you in all its strength and in all its simplicity, is not more the harbinger of peace to a sinner's heart, than it is the sure and unfailing germ of his progressive holiness.

LECTURE XXIX.

ROMANS, vi, 1, 2.

"What shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

We have ever been in the habit of regarding this chapter as the passage of greatest interest in the Bible—as that in which the greatest quantity of scriptural light is thrown on what to the eye of the general world is a depth and a mystery—even on that path of transition which leads from the imputed righteousness that is by faith, to the personal righteousness that is by new and spiritual obedience. We know not a single theme in the whole compass of Christianity, on which there rests to the natural discernment a cloud of thicker obscurity, than that which relates to the origin and growth of a believer's holiness—nor is it seen how, after an immunity so ample for sin has been provided by an atonement of which the power is infinite as the Divinity Himself, there remaineth any inducement to obedience so distinct and palpable and certain of operation, as that which is offered by the law of 'Do this and live'—a law that we are given to understand is now superseded by the gospel terms of 'Believe and ye shall be saved.' It is of importance to know surely what were the first suggestions which arose in the apostolical mind, when met by what appears to be a most plausible

and pertinent objection taken to the doctrine of grace, as if it led to licentiousness; or to the doctrine of a free and full remission of sin, as if it encouraged the disciple to a secure and wanton perseverance in all its practices. In the apostle's reply to this, we might expect those ligaments to be made bare to our view, by which justification and sanctification are bound together in constant and inseparable alliance; and in virtue of which it is, that a sinner both feels himself secure from the penalty of sin, and keeps himself most strenuously and fearfully aloof from the performance of it.

We have already said that it was of use to mark the recurrence of similar phrases in the train of the apostle's reasoning, as it may serve to mark the connection of its distant parts, and thus to afford a more commanding view of his whole argument. We have no doubt that the question of this verse—'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?'—was prompted by a recently written sentence in the preceding chapter, the very cadence of which seemed to be still alive in the apostle's memory—"Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."—It is well to trace the continuity of Scripture, broken and disjointed as it is by the artificial division that has been made of it into chapters and verses—to read the letter of an inspired writer, as you would read the letter of an ordinary acquaintance, not in sheets, but as an entire composition, through which there possibly runs the drift of one prevailing conception which he aims to establish; and thus it is that we think to have profited by the perusal of those editions of the

Bible, which vary from the one that is current, by the simple device of omitting the verses, and casting it like any ordinary book into sections and paragraphs. But the possession of the Bible in such a form is by no means indispensable. In reading the bibles that you have, be aware of the concatenation that we now speak of; and let it not be frittered away on your minds, by those mechanical breaks through which, to a listless peruser of Holy Writ, the sense is often interrupted. In guarding against the disadvantage which has just been specified, you will be led to the habit of comparing scripture with scripture—a habit, which, if accompanied by that divine illumination without which even the Bible itself is made up of bare and barren literalities, will be altogether tantamount to that habit of the apostle, through which he became a proficient in the wisdom that the Holy Ghost teacheth—even the habit of comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Ver. 2. 'God forbid'—Let us here bid you remark the prompt decisive and unhesitating reply of the apostle, to the question wherewith he introduces this chapter. Paul has by way of eminence been called the apostle of justification. By no other has the doctrine of pardon as held out in free dispensation on the one hand, and as received by simple trust upon the other, been more fully and zealously vindicated. Heaven, instead of coming to the sinner through the medium of wages and work, is made to come to him through the medium of a gift and an acceptance. One would think from his representation of the matter, that salva-

tion was brought to the door of a sinner's bosom, nay even pressing against it for admittance; and that you have simply to open the door, and by an act of sufferance to allow its ingress, and thus to feed upon it and rejoice. God, the offended party, beseeches the transgressor to be reconciled; and it is when the transgressor pleases consent and compliance with this entreaty, that the act of reconciliation is struck, and an agreement is entered upon. All this is implied in the preceding argument of the apostle, and in the terms of constant recurrence that he employs during the prosecution of it. The tenure upon which eternal life is given, and upon which it is held under the economy of the gospel—is made abundantly manifest by such phrases as 'grace,' and 'free grace,' and 'justification of faith and not of works,' and the 'gift of righteousness' on the one hand, and the 'receiving of the atonement' on the other. And yet the apostle, warm from the delivery of these intimations, and just discharged of the tidings of a sinner's impunity if he will, and within a single breath of having uttered that where there was abundance of guilt there was a superabundance of grace in store for it—when met by the question of What then? shall we do more of this sin, that we may draw more of this grace? is ready at the warning of a single moment, with a most clear and emphatic negative. And he gives his affirmation, before he gives his argument upon the subject. On his simple authority as a messenger from God, he enters his solemn caveat against the continuance of sin—so that should you understand not his rea-

soning, you may at least be fully assured of the truth, that, lavish and liberal as the gospel is of its forgiveness for the past, it has no toleration either for the purposes or for the practices of sin in future.

Couple this verse with the one that we have recently alluded to; and you make out, from the simple change of tense, as you pass from the one to the other, two of the most important lessons of Christianity. By the first verse we are told that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. By the second we are resolved as to the question, 'Shall I continue in sin that grace may abound?' with the decisive and unqualified answer of, No most assuredly. With the first of these verses we feel ourselves warranted, to offer the fullest indemnity to the worst and most worthless among you, for all the offences, however many and however aggravated, of your past history. We know not what the measure of your iniquity may have been. We are not privy to the scenes of profligacy and lawless abandonment, through which you may have passed. We are not in the secret of any of those foul atrocities, wherewith the perhaps now agonised memory of some hearer is charging him. We cannot take the dimensions of the crime and the carelessness and the ungodliness, of those years that have now rolled over you—But whatever these dimensions may be, we are entitled to proclaim an element of surpassing magnitude, that will pluck the sting out of this sore moral distemper, and most effectually neutralise it. Your sin has abounded, and if you feel aright your conscience will re-echo our af-

firmation; but the grace of God has much more abounded. Be assured every one who is now present, that there is no sin into which he has ever fallen, that is beyond the reach of the great gospel atonement—no guilt of so deep and inveterate a dye, that the blood of a crucified Saviour cannot wash away. It is thus that we would cheer and brighten the retrospect of every sinner's contemplations. It is thus that we would cast the offer and assurance of pardon over the whole extent of the life that has passed away; and, arresting you at this point of your personal history, at which we are pouring forth our present utterance in your hearing—I would say, "Come now and let us reason together; though your sins were as scarlet they shall become as wool, though they were as crimson they shall be made white as snow."

But the sinner, from the station that he at this moment occupies, has not merely to look back—he should also look forward, and hold up the light of the gospel, not merely to the region of memory which he has already travelled, but also to the region of anticipation on which he is entering. And let it never be forgotten by you, ye men who are now in earnestness and thoughtful enquiry, and for aught we know may be at the very turning point of your eternal salvation—forget not we say that the same gospel which sheds an oblivion over all the sinfulness of your past lives, enters upon a war of extermination against all your future sinfulness. You have not yet come under its economy at all, if you have not embarked on the struggle of all your powers and all your purposes with the power

of iniquity over you—nor would we say of you on the one hand that grace has abounded unto the forgiveness of sin, unless we saw of you on the other an honest and determined habit of exertion against the continuance of sin. We may not be able to follow the apostle in his argument; but we may at least take up his affirmation. Whether or not we shall see the intermediate steps of that process, through which a sinner is conducted from the sense of his reconciliation with God to the strenuousness of a conflict that is unremitting against all iniquity—yet may we be very sure, from the averment before us, that such actually is the process; and that such, in the case of every real believer, is the personal and the practical result of it. And not more surely does the gospel cast a veil over the transgressions by which the retrospect of your history is deformed, than, in some way or other, it sends forth a sanative influence by which to restrain transgression throughout the remainder of your pilgrimage in the world.

Ver. 2. Yet we should like to know the intervening steps by which a sinner is led onwards from his justification to his sanctification; and more especially when we find that curiosity in this matter, is warranted by the apostle himself leading the way, in a train of argumentation which he presents throughout the whole line of the chapter before us. To follow the apostle with a view thoroughly to understand his reasoning upon this subject, is not surely any attempt on our part to be wise above that which is written, but rather the altogether fair and legitimate attempt to be wise up to

that which is written. And we repeat that we know of no track in the field of Christianity more hidden from the general eye, and yet of more big and eventful importance in the history of every believer, than that by which he is carried onward from the remission of his sin to the renewal of his soul —and so is made to exemplify the walk of one, who feels himself to be secure against the punishment of sin, and yet sets himself in the attitude of determined and unsparing warfare against its power.

It is altogether essential to our understanding the sense of the apostle's argument, that we find the import of the phrase 'dead unto sin;' and it so happens that it admits of a twofold interpretation, which might serve to bewilder us, did not each of them suggest an argument against our continuance in sin, that is in every way accordant with some of the plainest and most unambiguous passages in the New Testament.

The term 'dead,' in the phrase 'dead unto sin,' may be understood forensically—in which case it is not meant that we are dead in fact, but dead in law; or it may be understood personally, in which case the being dead unto sin will mean that we are dead thereunto in our affections for it—that we are no longer alive to the power of its allurements; but that, in virtue of the appetites of our sensitive frame being mortified to the pleasures which are but for a season, we sin not as we wont, just because the incitements to sin have not the power they wont to seduce us unto the ways of disobedience.

It may be remarked ere we proceed farther, that

many commentators understand this phrase according to the latter explanation—yet the former we think ought not to be overlooked, as it involves a principle most true and important in itself, and brings out an argument against our continuance in sin, which is in most striking harmony with one of the most explicit and memorable quotations that can be educed from the whole compass of the sacred volume.

To understand forensically the phrase that we are dead unto sin, is to understand that for sin we are dead in law. The doom of death was upon us on account of sin; and we were in the condition of malefactors, on whom capital sentence had been pronounced, and who were now in that place of imprisonment from whence they were shortly to be led forth to execution. Conceive that the whole amount of the punishment for sin was the simple annihilation of the sinner—that, just as under a civil government a criminal is often put to death for the vindication of its authority and for the removal of a nuisance from society, so, let it be imagined, that, under the jurisprudence of Heaven, an utter extinction of being was laid upon the sinner, both for the purpose of maintaining, in respect and authority, Heaven's law, and also for the purpose of removing a nuisance and a contamination from the great spiritual family. Let us further imagine, not merely that the sentence is pronounced, but that the sentence is executed; that the life of the transgressor is taken away; and that, by an act of extermination reaching to the soul as well as to the body, the whole light of con-

sciousness is put out, and he is expunged altogether from the face of God's animated creation. There could be no misunderstanding of the phrase if when, in speaking of this individual after all this had befallen him, you were to say that he was dead unto or dead for sin; and such an announcement regarding him were just as distinctly intelligible, as when you tell of one who has undergone the capital sentence of the law, that he was one who for his crimes had suffered execution.

It is conceivable after such a catastrophe, that God may have devised a way, by which, in consistency with His own character and with all the purposes of His government, He might remake and reanimate the creature who had undergone this infliction—might assemble the particles of his now dissipated materialism into the same body as before, and might infuse into it a spirit, on which He shall stamp the very same identical consciousness as before, and thus introduce at once again within that universe of life where it wont to expatiate. The phrase 'we are dead unto sin,' might still adhere to him, though now alive from the dead. It had been still our rightful sentence, and we would still have been lying under it—had not some expedient been fallen upon, or some equivalent been rendered, in virtue of which it is that we have been recalled from the chambers of dark nonenity, and been made to break forth again upon a peopled scene of sense and intelligence and feeling. And in these circumstances, is it for us to continue in sin—we who for sin were consigned to annihilation, and have only by the kindness of a Saviour been rescued

from it—is it for us to repeat that thing, of whose malignity we have had in our own persons such a dreadful experience? Is it for us, on whom the blow of God's insulted and provoked authority has so tremendously fallen, and who under its force would still, but for a Redeemer's interference, have been profoundly asleep in the womb of nothingness—is it for us again to brave the displeasure of that God whose hatred of sin is as unchangeable as His sacredness is unchangeable?—Above all is it for us, who have had such recent demonstration of the antipathies that subsist between sin and holiness—is it for us, who experimentally know that under the government of the one there for the other can be no harbour and no toleration—is it for us, who have learned from our own history, that sin is not permitted so much as to breathe within the limits of God's beloved family, and that to keep it clear of a scandal so foul and so enormous He roots up every plant and specimen that is stained by it—is it for us who, have thus once been rooted up and once been swept away, but, by the stretching forth of a mediatorial hand, have again been summoned to the being and the birthright we formerly had in the inheritance of children—is it for us to repeat that abomination which is as uncongenial to the whole tone and spirit of the Divinity now as ever; and will remain as offensive to His eye, and as utterly irreconcilable to His nature through all eternity?

Now the argument retains its entireness, though the Mediator should interfere with His equivalent, ere the penalty of death has been inflicted—though

instead of drawing them out of the pit of destruction, He by ransom should deliver them from going down into that pit—though, instead of suffering them to die for their sins and then reviving them from their state of annihilation, He should himself die for them: and they, freed from the execution of the sentence, should be continued in that life of which they had incurred the forfeiture. Still they were dead in law. To die was their rightful doom, though this doom was borne by another, and so borne away from them. Had they actually died for sin, and by the services of a mediator been brought alive again—the argument would have been, How shall we who died for sin, now that we live, continue in that which is so incompatible with the divine government, that, wherever it exists, it behoves by death to be swept away? And the argument is just as strong though the services of the Mediator are applied sooner, and are of effect to prevent the death instead of recovering it. Such is the malignity of sin, that, under its operation, we would have been blotted out from the living universe—such is the sacredness of God that sin cannot exist within the precincts of His loving-kindness; and so we, who lay under its condemnation, would, but for a Redeemer's services, have been deposed from our standing in creation. We were as good as dead, for the sentence had gone forth, and was coming in sure aim and fatality on our devoted persons, when Christ stepped between, and, suffering it to light upon Himself, carried it away. And shall we, who, because of sin, were then on the point of extermination from a scene

for which sin had unfitted us—shall we continue in sin, after an escape had been thus made good for us? Shall we do that thing, the doing of which would have been our death, had it not been for a redeeming process whereby life was preserved to us; and is it at all conceivable, that this redemption would have been wrought, and that for the very purpose of upholding us in the very sin which made our redemption necessary?

To use the term dead in a forensic meaning, is not a gratuitous or unauthorised interpretation on our part. We have the example of Paul himself for it, in that memorable passage of first Corinthians, where he says, that "we thus judge, that as Christ died for all, then were all dead"—not personally dead—not dead in regard of affection for what was sinful; but dead in law—dead in respect of that sure condemnation, which, but for Christ, would have been fulfilled upon all—not executed but on the eve of execution: and whether the Saviour prevent the accomplishment of the sentence, or revive and restore them after it, the argument of the apostle is the same. Christ by dying, and that to preserve them from dying, did as much for them, as if He had brought them back again from the chambers of death—as if He had put life into them anew, after it was utterly extinguished—as if He had placed them once again within the limits of God's family; and given them a second standing on the platform of life, from which sin had before swept them off. It is making Christ the author of our life, which He is as effectually by preventing its extermination, as He would have

been by infusing it anew into us after it was destroyed; and the practical lesson comes out as impressively in the one case as in the other—even that we should give up the life to Him who thus has kept or who thus has recalled it, or that we should live no longer to ourselves but to Him who died for us and who rose again.

We trust you may now perceive, how impressive the consideration is on which we are required to give up sin under the economy of the gospel. For sin we were all under sentence of death. Had the sentence taken effect, we would all have been outcasts from God's family. Sin is that scandal which must be rooted out, from that great spiritual household over which the Divinity rejoices—so that on its very first appearance, an edict of expulsion went forth; and men became exiles from the domain of Almighty favour, just because they were sinners. It is conceivable that the sentence might be arrested, or that it might be recalled; but it were strange indeed, if, after being doomed to exile because they had been sinners, they should cease to be exiles and be sinners still. Strange administration indeed for sin to be so hateful to God, as to lay all who had incurred it under death; and yet when readmitted into life, that sin should be permitted, and what was before the object of destroying vengeance should now become the object of an upheld and protected toleration. Every thing done and arranged by God—bears upon it the impress of His character. And it was indeed fell demonstration of His antipathy to sin, under the first arrangement of matters between Him and

the species, that, when it entered our world, the doom of extermination from all favour and fellowship with God should instantly go forth against it. And now that the doom is taken off—think you it possible, that the unchangeable God has so given up His antipathy to sin, as that man, ruined and redeemed man, may now perseveringly indulge, under the new arrangement, in that which under the old arrangement destroyed him? Does not the God who loved righteousness and hated iniquity six thousand years ago, bear the same love to righteousness and the same hatred to iniquity still? And well may not the sinner say—if on my own person such a dreadful memorial of God's hatred to sin was on the eve of being inflicted, as that of everlasting destruction from His presence—if the awfulness of such a vindictive manifestation was about to be realised on me individually, when a great Mediator interposed; and, standing between me and God, bare in his own body the whole brunt of His coming vengeance—if when thus kept from the destruction which sin drew upon me, and so as good as if rescued from that abyss of destruction into which sin had thrown me, I now breathe the air of loving-kindness from Heaven, and can walk before God in peace and graciousness—Shall I again attempt the incompatible alliance of two principles so adverse, as that of an approving God and a persevering sinner; or again try the Spirit of that Being, who, in the whole process of my condemnation and my rescue has given such proof of most sensitive and unspotted holiness?

There shall be nothing, says God, to hurt, or to

offend in all my holy mountain. It is in conformity to this, that death is inflicted upon the sinner; and this death is neither more nor less then his expulsion from the family of holiness. Through Jesus Christ, we come again unto mount Zion, which is the heavenly Jerusalem; and it is as fresh as ever in the verdure of a perpetual holiness. How shall we who were found unfit for residence in this place because of sin, continue in sin after our readmittance therein? How shall we, recovered from so awful a catastrophe, continue that which first involved us in it? or again take on that disease which has already evinced itself to be of such virulence, as to be a disease unto death?

LECTURE XXX.

ROMANS, vi, 3—7.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

VER. 3, 4. The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifferency, whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling —yet we doubt not, that the prevalent style of the administration in the apostle's days, was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water. We advert to this, for the purpose of throwing light on the analogy that is instituted in these verses. Jesus Christ by death underwent this sort of baptism—even immersion under the surface of the ground, whence He soon emerged again by His resurrection. We by being baptized into His death, are conceived to have made a similar translation—In the act of descending under the water of baptism to have resigned an old life, and in the act of ascending to emerge into a second or a new life—along the course of which it is our part to maintain a strenuous avoidance of that sin, which

as good as expunged the being that we had formerly; and a strenuous prosecution of that holiness, which should begin with the first moment that we were ushered into our present being, and be perpetuated and make progress toward the perfection of full and ripened immortality.

'Baptized into his death'—or regarding ourselves as if like Him we had actually been slain and buried, and like Him brought forth anew and made alive again, before that God who for our sins had swept us beyond the circle of His favoured creation. This would have been had not Christ died; and though He by pouring out His soul for us, has kept us in the favour that else would have been forfeited and that for ever—yet the argument is the same, if prevented from going down into the pit, as if after being cast headlong into it for our sins we had again been extricated therefrom. How shall we whom sin had at that time blotted out from the family of life, now that we are readmitted, again indulge in it? How shall we run counter to those holy antipathies of the divine nature, of the strength and irreconcilableness of which we already in our own persons have had so fell a manifestation? How shall we, rescued from destruction, again welcome to our embraces the destroyer?—or, living anew under the eye of that God who could not endure the presence of sin and so consigned it to the exile of death everlasting, shall we live again in that very course which made our former existence so offensive to Him and so incompatible with the whole spirit and design of His government? Has He changed His taste or His character? or

makes it any difference to the argument, that a Mediator interposed and took upon Himself the whole weight of that avenging arm, which was lifted up for our extermination? Is not the exhibition of God's hatred and hostility to sin just as impressive, that the stroke of jealousy fell upon the head of His own Son, as it would have been, had it fallen on the guilty millions, whom this mighty Captain shielded from the vindictive discharge that else would have overwhelmed us? And whether these billows of wrath have all been broken on the Rock of our Salvation; or first made to pass over us, we had again been summoned from the depth and caused to emerge anew into the sunshine of God's reconciled countenance—does it not equally prove that He, the everlasting enemy of sin, will, in any new economy that He may institute, still evince it to be that hateful thing for which He has no taste, and can have no toleration?

So much for the application of the phrase 'dead unto sin,' when understood forensically. We trust that however imperfectly we may have illustrated this part of the argument, you have been made to perceive that there is in it the force and the power of a most impressive consideration; and, whether you have seized upon it or not, be at least very sure of this—that, such is the fact of the matter, there is no indulgence for sin under the dispensation of the gospel. It is a restorative dispensation, by which you are alike kept from the penalty of sin and cured of its polluting virulence. It restores you to the favour of God, but it restores you not to the liberty of sinning; and the argument where-

with we would arm and fortify the principles of all who now feel themselves alive in Christ Jesus is—shall we continue in that hateful thing which would have brought me to the death, had not my Saviour, for my deliverance and preservation, bowed down His head unto the sacrifice?

We have already tried to set forth in your hearing the forensic interpretation, that might be given of the phrase '*dead unto sin*'—dead for sin—not that the sentence was inflicted, but that the sentence was pronounced; and the argument why they should not continue in sin, is as strongly applicable to those who are delivered from a doom that was impending, as to those who are recalled from a doom that was actually executed. There were a most direct force in the consideration—should a revived criminal press it upon his moral feelings—how can I recur to that which is so odious in the sight of my country's government, that I had to suffer a death for it, from which I, by a miracle perhaps of mercy, have been restored? And it ought to be as powerful a consideration with a reprieved criminal, whose sentence has been suspended, and perhaps by the intercession of a Mediator been finally withdrawn. The recurrence to that which brought down the sentence, were just as monstrous a violence done to the whole spirit and object of the administration under which I live, in the one case as in the other; and be assured that there were the very same violence done to the spirit of Heaven's administration—should those who are redeemed from death under the economy of the gospel, live in that which had sunk them under so fear-

ful a condemnation. For sin we were ready to die. For sin we would have died had not Christ interposed, and undergone in His own person that shedding of blood without which remission is impossible. The demonstration given of God's antipathies to the power and existence of sin in His kingdom, is as strong by the falling of the deadly blow upon the head of a Mediator, as if it had fallen direct on the head of those He died for. And shall we from whom the stroke of vengeance has been averted—shall we who are still in life but virtually in a life from the dead—shall we who in Christ may so read what but for Him would have happened to ourselves, as to be baptized into His death and to be planted together in the likeness of it—shall we, kept from falling into the abyss of condemnation, and therefore as good as if summoned again from its depths on the platform of God's favoured and rejoicing family—continue in that hateful thing, which but for Christ would have destroyed us, and of God's abhorrence to which the atoning death of Christ gives so awful and impressive a manifestation?

But while we have thus insisted on the forensic interpretation of the phrase 'dead unto sin'—yet let us not forbear to urge the personal sense of it, as implying such a deadness of affection to sin, such an extinction of the old sensibility to its allurements and its pleasures, as that it has ceased from its wonted power of ascendancy over the heart and character of him who was formerly its slave. We think that this sense too was in the mind of the apostle; and that he speedily takes it up in the prosecution

of his argument. But we are rather induced to believe, that he starts his argument with the phrase understood forensically—that out of the premises already established he gathers an immediate and very powerful dissuasive against the continuance of the believer in sin—that, without assuming as yet any revolution of desire on his part, he plies him with a question which ought by its moral influence to work such a revolution, and a question too that emanates direct from the truth about which the apostle had just been previously employed, even that Christ died for us; or, in other words, that we, under a rightful sentence of death, had yet been suffered to live by the transference of the doom upon the person of another. And shall we in these circumstances, persist in doing the very thing that had brought that doom upon us?—a very pertinent question most assuredly at this stage of his reasoning; and a question, which, did it tell with the impression it ought on the heart of a disciple, would lead him to abjure sin; and so from the thought that he was dead unto it forensically, would it conduct him to the reality of being dead unto it actually and habitually and personally.

But you will surely perceive that, to bring about this effect, something more is necessary than merely to address to the corrupt mind of man some new moral suasion that had never been brought to bear upon it. We are not aware that it lies within the influence of any argument, to deaden the appetites of nature for that which is sinful. It is true, that, in consequence of what Christ hath done, a new topic and a new suggestion can be offered to the

sinner, which had Christ not done, no such topic could have at all been urged upon him. But we fear that it is not enough to bring argument however powerful from without, whereby to assail the feelings and propensities of the human heart—that additional to the great outward transaction of Christ's atoning death, from which we have endeavoured to fetch a persuasive for turning from all iniquity—there must be also an inward operation upon every disciple, ere the persuasive can be so listened to as to be practically effectual: or, in other words,—as, through what Christ hath done for us we are forensically dead unto sin, so, that we may be regarded as having already undergone the curse in Him—so, there must also be a something done in us, a personal change wrought, a deadening process undergone whereby sin is no longer of power over us.

Now though this be the work of the Spirit—yet the Spirit accommodates His work to the nature of the subject upon which He is employed. He treats man as a rational and intelligent being. It is not by the resistlessness of a blind impulse, that He carries any given effect on the desires of the heart —but by making man see what is desirable, and then choose it, and then labour after it with all the strenuousness of a willing and purposing and acting creature. He does not become personally dead unto sin, or personally alive unto righteousness, but by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Yet this operation is not a simple fiat, by which the transition is brought about without the steps of such a process—as marks the judgment, and

the feeling, and the conscience, and the various other mental faculties of him who is made to undergo this great regeneration. Agreeably to the language of our Shorter Catechism, though this be the work of God's Spirit—yet it is a work whereby He convinces and He enlightens the mind, and He renews the will, and He persuades to that which is right, and He enables for the performance of it. Let us endeavour, if possible, to trace the succession of those moral influences, by which man under the gospel is conducted from the natural state of being alive to sin and to the world, to the state of being dead unto these things and alive unto God.

Ver. 5, 6. We are planted together in the likeness of His death—By His death He bore the curse of a violated law and now it has no further charge against Him. He acquitted Himself to the full of all its penalties; and now He is for ever exempted against any future reckoning with a creditor whom He has conclusivly set aside; and just because He has completely satisfied him. He is now that immortal Vine, who stands for ever secure and beyond the reach of any devouring blight from the now appeased enemy; and we who by faith are united with Him as so many branches, share in this blessed exemption along with Him. We have as good as had the sentence of death discharged upon us already. In Christ our propitiation we have rendererd the executor all his dues. In Him our Surety we have paid a debt, for which we can no longer be craved or reckoned with. And here we are like unto Christ, in that

we are as secure from the visitation of the great penalty, as if we had borne it ourselves—in that as with Him the hour and the power of darkness have now passed away, and never again to go over Him; so we, just as if we had undergone the same trial and the same baptism, come forth acquitted of all our trespasses and the hand of the avenging adversary shall never reach us.

And as we thus share in His death, so shall we also share in His resurrection. From the humiliation of the grave, He arose to the heights of sublimest glory. By what He hath borne in our stead, we now stand as exempted from punishment as if we had borne it ourselves. By what He hath done of positive obedience in our stead, He hath not only been highly exalted in His own person; but He hath made us the partakers of His exaltation, to the rewards of which we shall be promoted as if we had rendered the obedience ourselves. And it is thus that we understand the being planted together with Him in the likeness of His death, and the being planted together with Him in the likeness of His resurrection.

The sixth verse we think ushers in the transition from the forensic to the personal. By being dead unto sin we understand that we are spoken of as in the condition of having already undergone the penalty of death, and so being acquitted of this great penal consequence of sin. We get into this condition, not by actually suffering the death; but, as it is expressed in the third verse, by being baptized unto the death of Christ, and so as in the fourth verseby being buried with Him in this bap-

tism, and in the fifth verse planted together with Him in the likeness of His death—All indicative of our being forensically dealt with on account of Christ's death, just as if we ourselves had undergone the suffering which for us He hath endured. And we would even carry this style of interpretation to the first clause of the sixth verse; and understand by the old man being crucified with Him, that the sinner is now to be reckoned with, just as if, in his own person, he had sustained the adequate punishment of that guilt, for which Christ rendered the adequate expiation. And all this however for a posterior end—all this for a purpose specified in the remaining part of the verse now under consideration—all this for the achievement of such a personal change upon the believer, as that in him the body of sin might at length be altogether destroyed; and that henceforth, or from the moment of his becoming a believer, he might not serve sin.

This tallies with another part of the Bible, where it is said that Christ gave Himself up for us—suffered in our stead—died the death that legally impended over us, so that the sentence is as much over and away from us, as if it had been inflicted on our own persons—This He did for an end even posterior to that of our deliverance from condemnation—for an end analogous to the one stated in the verse before us—even that the body of sin might be destroyed, and that we should not serve sin; or, as we have it in the passage now referred to, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

Now where it may be asked is the connection? How comes it that because we are partakers in the crucifixion of Christ, so that the law has no further severity to discharge upon us—how comes it that this should have any effect in destroying the body of sin, or in emancipating us from the service of sin? Whence is it that exoneration from the penalty, should lead to emancipation from the power? What is the hidden tie that conducts the believer from being forensically dead unto sin, to his being personally dead unto sin also? How is it that the fact of his being acquitted leads to the fact of his being sanctified? and what is the precise nature of that step which conducts from the pardon of a reconciled, to the purity of a regenerated creature?

There can be no doubt that the Spirit of God both originates and carries forward the whole of this process. He gives the faith which makes Christ's death as available for our deliverance from guilt, as if we had suffered the death in our own persons; and He causes the faith to germinate all those moral and spiritual influences, which bring about the personal transformation that we are enquiring of. But these He does, in a way that is agreeable to the principles of our rational nature; so that His agency does not supersede the question —how is it that a belief on our part, that we are so far partakers of the death of Christ as to partake in the deliverance which it hath wrought from the guilt of sin—how is it that this belief destroys the being of sin upon our persons, and releases us from that slavery in which nature is held to its allurements and its charms?

We apprehend one way of it, to be through the expulsive power of a new affection to dispossess an old one from the heart. You cannot destroy your love of sin, by a simple act of extermination. You cannot thus bid away from your bosom, one of its dearest and oldest favourites. Our moral nature abhors the vacuum that would be formed, by an old affection taking its departure from the chambers of the inner man, without any new affection to succeed it. The former favourite will retain his place and his ascendancy there, till he is supplanted by a new one, ready to take up his room, and to give the sensation of full and well-liked company—so as not to leave the heart in a state of dreary and woful abandonment. It is thus that the man who feels his only portion to be on earth, and that heaven is hopelessly beyond his reach, resigns himself to the full and undivided sway of earthly affections. He cannot bid them away from him. They cleave to him with a tenacity and a power of adherence, that nothing but the mastery of a new affection can possibly overcome; and whence, if heaven is impregnably shut against him, whence can he fetch the instrument that will drive out the legion of earthly feelings and earthly desires and earthly idolatries, which now lord it over him, and have established the empire and tyranny of sin within the confines of his moral and spiritual nature? Let it be his feeling that heaven is unattainable; and this will chill and discourage within him all longing for the enjoyments that are there—so that his love of the enjoyments which are here, will keep undisturbed

possession of his soul and give the character and the colour of atheism to all its movements. He will live without God in the world; and never till the favour of God be made accessible to him—never till the joys of the upper Paradise are placed within his reach—never till the barrier be thrown down, which defends his approaches to the happy world that lies in the distant futurity away from him—never till then will the powers of the world that is to come carry it over the pleasures of the world that is present, and by which he is immediately surrounded. The old affections will cleave and keep their obstinate and undisputed hold, just because the proper engine is not brought into contact with the heart, and which can alone avail for the dispossession of them. They will not give way at a simple mandate from the chair of reason or philosophy; and nothing can expel them from the bosom—but the powerful and victorious rivalship of new affections sent into the heart, from new objects placed within the grasp either of certain or of possible attainment.

Now the death of Christ is the breaking down of the else insuperable barrier. It has fetched other objects from afar, and placed them within the attainment of sinful man, and presented them to his free choice, and brought the delights of eternity to his very door—so that, if he just have faith to perceive them, he is brought into the very condition, that, by the bias of his moral and sentient nature, is most favourable to the extinction of old appetites, and that just by the intruding and dispossessing power of a new one. The things

guilt; but should a competent mediator take upon his own person the whole burden of its imputation and its penalty, we, in him, may be said to have been pursued even unto death which was its sentence, and should now feel clear of the weight of conscious guilt—because in him we have rendered a full atonement. And we live beneath our privilege, we fail in making the required use of the great propitiation, we are deficient of the homage that is due to its completeness and its power—if we cast not the burden of legal condemnation away from our spirits. It is detracting from the richness and the efficacy of Heaven's boon, for us to cherish the haunting imagination of a debt, that the revealed Surety has done away—or, changing the terms, to cherish the haunting imagination of a guilt, for which the High Priest whom God Himself has set forth, has made a sacrifice wherewith God Himself has declared that He is well pleased. So that it is your positive duty to take the comfort of this, and to feel the deliverance of this. In as far as you do not, in so far you nullify the work of redemption, and cast a dimness and a disparagement over the most illustrious exhibition of Heaven's grace—dignified as it is with the full expression of Heaven's righteousness. Be dead with Christ then; and, this you are by putting faith in the atoning efficacy of that death. He who so believes is as free from condemnation, as if the cup of it had been put into his own hands, and he had already exhausted it to its last dregs—as if in his own person, he had walked the whole length of the valley and shadow of that death which every

sinner has rightfully incurred—as if what was only possible for the Godhead to have borne within a given compass of time he himself had borne, the sufferings of that eternity which is in reserve for all the guilt that is unexpiated. Be dead with Christ, by giving credit to the gospel testimony about the death of Christ, and the whole of this tremendous retribution for sin with you is as good as over; and it is your own comfort, as well as God's commandment, that you henceforth, with the assurance of being set at liberty from sin, walk before Him relieved from the bondage both of its conscious guilt and of its anticipated vengeance.

But in order to be fully conformed to the death of Christ, we must advert to what is said in the 9th and 10th verses, about the full and conclusive efficacy of it—so conclusive, that it had not again to be repeated, for He had to die only once, and death hath no more dominion over Him. There was power enough for the whole purpose of our deliverance from guilt in the *one* offering—a truth of sufficient worth, it would appear, to be urged by the apostle in other places of the New Testament, when he says, that Christ did not offer Himself often; for then must He have often suffered since the foundation of the world—but now *once*, hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: And Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many: And it is through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once* for all, that we are cleansed from guilt: And, finally, laying upon this point the stress of a frequent reiteration, does the apostle say that it is by *one* offering that we are

for ever perfected. There is surely a real practical importance in a matter so much insisted on; and accordingly, we infer from another passage, that it was to save the believer from the constant recurrence and revival, in his heart, of a sense of guilt—it was that, once purged, he should have no more conscience of sins—it was that he should look on the controversy between him and God as now fully adjusted, and at an end—it was that in the contemplation of that one act, even the decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem, he should feel as conclusively relieved from the imagination of guilt, as the son, in whose behalf the father has interposed and given ample satisfaction to all his creditors, feels himself relieved from the imagination of debt—it was that we should no longer conjure into life again, those fearful misgivings, which the one death of Christ and our death with Him should hush into everlasting oblivion—So that, if it be our duty to rejoice in the comfort of our full acquittance, through the satisfaction rendered by Him who poured out His soul for us—it goes to enhance the comfort still more, that there is an amount and a value in this same satisfaction, for meeting all the exigencies of our future history in the world—thus ministering the very antidote to our fears, which the apostle John urges upon his disciples, that if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, even Him who is the propitiation for our sins, Jesus Christ the righteous.

If we be dead with Christ, and death have no more dominion over Him—this is tantamount to guilt being no longer chargeable upon us. And

ought not this to be felt as a precious enhancement of the blessing? setting an irrevocable seal as it were upon our reconciliation with God—placing it securely beyond the reach, not merely of the impediments which sin already contracted had thrown in the way; but also beyond the reach of all those future accidents, that the sin, into which we shall be surprised or into which we shall stumble, may afterwards involve us. We set not the remedy at its full worth, if we use it not to quiet the alarms of the guilt that is before us, as well as of the guilt that is behind us—if, like the children of Israel, we think that some great purifying ceremonial must be set up anew to wash away the outstanding defilements of the current year, under which they are meanwhile in a state of distance and displeasure from God—if we regard not the fulness that is in Christ as a perennial fountain, which is at all times accessible; and is a very present cure to the conscience, under the many inroads and solicitations of that sinful nature which never ceases to beset us with its urgency—Thus overbearing the sense of guilt with the sense of that healing virtue which lies in the blood of the one sacrifice; and upholding the spirit of the believer, even while opprest with the infirmities of his earthly tabernacle, in the clear and confident feeling of his acceptance with God.

But is not this, it may be said, equivalent to the holding forth of a Popish indulgence for all sins, past, present, and to come? And, is not this a signal for antinomianism? And will not the feeling of our death to the guilt of sin, make us all

alive to the charm of its many allurements—now heightened by a sense of impunity? And will not the peace that we are thus called upon to maintain, even while sin has its residence in our hearts, lull us still further into a peace that will not be broken, even though sin should reign over our habits and our history? We have sometimes thought so, my brethren, and, under the suggestion of such a fear, have qualified the freeness, and laid our clauses and our exceptions and our drawbacks on the fulness of the gospel; and, solicitous for the purity of the human character, have lifted a timid and a hesitating voice when proclaiming the overtures of pardon for human guilt. But we are now thoroughly persuaded, that the effective way of turning men from sin to righteousness, is to throw, wide and open before them, the door of reconciliation; and that a real trust in God for acceptance, is ever accompanied with a real movement of the heart towards godliness; and that to mix or darken the communications of good-will to the world through Him who died for it, is not more adverse to the rest of the sinner, than it is adverse to the holiness of the sinner; and that, after all, the true way of keeping up love in the heart, is to keep up peace in the conscience—thus making your freedom from the guilt of sin, the best guarantee for your deliverance from its power; and this because if you can interpose the death of Christ in arrest of condemnation, when Satan for the purposes of disturbance would inject the fears of unbelief into your bosom, he the great adversary of souls, paralysed at the very sight of such a barrier in all his measures of

hostility against you, would retire a baffled enemy from that contest, in which, for the purposes of a sinful dominion over you, he tried to assail and to conquer by the force of his temptations.

But the certainty of that connection, which obtains between a death unto the guilt of sin, and a death unto its power, will be more manifest afterwards: And, meanwhile, after having said so much on the clause of being dead with Christ, it may now be time for offering our remarks on the clause that we shall live with Him.

Yet before we proceed to the elucidation of this latter clause, we may remark a sanctifying influence in the former one. We are looked upon by the Lawgiver as dead with Christ—that is, as having in Him borne the penalty of our sins, and therefore as no longer the subjects of a curse that has already been discharged, of a condemnatory sentence that is already executed. Now though we share alike with Christ, in this privilege of a final acquittance from that death which has no more dominion over Him, and is for ever averted from us—yet it was at His expense alone, and not at ours, that the acquittance was obtained. It would have cost us an eternity of suffering in hell, to have traversed the whole of that vengeance that was denounced upon iniquity; and it was therefore so condensed upon the person of the Saviour, who had the infinity of the Godhead to sustain it, that on Him, during the limited period of His sufferings on earth, all the vials of the Almighty's wrath were poured forth and so were expended. By our fellowship with Him in His death, we have

been borne across a gulf, which to ourselves would have been utterly interminable; and have been landed on a safe and peaceful shore, over which no angry cloud whatever is suspended; and have been conclusively placed beyond the reach of those devouring billows, into which the despisers of the gospel salvation shall be absorbed, and have for ever their fiery habitation. But this is just because Christ has, in the greatness of His love, for us travelled through the depths of all this endurance—just because, in the agonies of the garden and the sufferings of the cross, were concentrated the torments of millions through eternity—just because, in that mysterious passion which for us He underwent, He with tears and cries and anguish unutterable, forced the way of reconciliation—And we who are dead with Christ, partake in all the triumphs of this sore purchase, but not in the pains of it; and have now our feet established on a quiet landing-place. And the sanctifying influence to which we now advert, and which no real believer can withstand, is gratitude to Him, who hath wrought out for us so mighty a deliverance. It is the respondency of love from our hearts, to that love which burnt so unquenchably in His, and bore Him up under the burden of a world's atonement. It is the rightful sentiment, that now we are not our own, but the ransomed and redeemed property of another. This touches, and touches irresistibly, upon him who rightly appreciates all the horrors of that everlasting captivity from which we have been brought, and all the expense of that dreadful equivalent which Christ had

to render—And he thus judges, that, as Christ died for all, then were all dead; and He died, that those who live might live no longer to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again.

'We believe that we shall also live with Him.' To explain the phrase of our being dead with Christ, we had to ascertain how it was that Christ was dead; and we find by the following verse that He died unto sin, and we in like manner are dead unto sin; or, in other words, the wages of sin being paid to Christ, there is no further reckoning between them—and, as this transaction was for us and in our stead, it is just as if death the wages of sin had been rendered unto us; and sin can now hold no further count, and prefer no further charge against us. This sense of dying unto sin on the part of Christ, will conduct us to the sense of His living unto God. The life that He now lives with Him, has been conferred upon Him in the shape of wages. In other words, it is a reward consequent upon what He has done for us, and in our stead—even as the death that He bore was a punishment, consequent upon His having become accountable for us, and in our stead. This will recall to you, my brethren, a distinction to which we have already had occasion to advert; and for which there seemeth a real warrant in the book of revelation—the distinction that there is, in point of effect, between the passive and the active obedience of Christ—the one satisfying for sin and making an end of its curse and punishment—So that to be dead with Christ and dead unto sin, is to live in the condi-

tion of those, on whom the curse and the punishment have already been expended; and who have therefore nothing now to fear from its charges—whereas to live with Christ or to be alive unto God, is to share with Him that positive favour which Christ hath merited from God by His positive righteousness. It is something more than simply to cease from being the children of wrath, and the heirs of damnation—it is to become the objects of a positive good-will, and the heirs or the expectants of a positive reward.

The single term *also*, indicates that the privilege of sharing with Him in His life, is distinct from and additional to the privilege of sharing in His death. By the one we only escape the curse—by the other we obtain the blessing. By the one, we are lightened of the debt which He hath discharged through His sufferings—by the other, we share in the property which He hath acquired through His services. The one shuts against us the gate of hell. The other opens for us the gate of heaven. Did we only share with Him in His death, we would be found midway between the region of pain and the region of positive enjoyment; but by also sharing with Him in His life, we are elevated to the higher region, and partake in those very glories and felicities to which the Saviour has been exalted. Had the alone work of the Saviour been an expiation for sin, there would have been a death, and such a death as would have exempted us from its endurance; but there would have been no resurrection. But in the words of the prophet Daniel, our Saviour did more than finish transgres-

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sion and make an end of sin—He also brought in an everlasting righteousness; and so reaped for Himself and those who believe in Him a positive reward, the first fruits of which were His own resurrection to blessedness, and the consummation of which will be a similar resurrection to all His followers. It was the atonement which laid Him in His grave. It was His righteousness that lifted Him forth again, and bore Him up to paradise. Had there been an atonement and nothing more, like prisoners dismissed from the bar we would have been simply let alone. But He brought in a righteousness also—so that we not only are relieved of all fear; but, inspired with joyful hope, we, in addition to being dead with Him, believe that we shall also live with Him. And thus it is, that, while He was delivered up unto the death for our offences, that the guilt of them may be absolved in the atonement which He made—He was raised again for our justification, or that we may share in that merit for which He Himself was exalted, and on account of which we too believe that we shall be exalted also.

You will see then, that as we understand the phrase of our dying with Christ forensically—so we understand the phrase of our living with Christ forensically. It is our living through His righteousness, in that favour which is better than life—the sense of which favour will keep our spirits tranquil and happy here; and will often, even among the turmoils of our earthly pilgrimage, brighten into such a gleam of comfort and elevation, as shall be the foretaste to us of the coming

extacy—when, on our entrance into the habitation of God's unclouded and immediate presence, we shall share with our Redeemer, now on high in His full enjoyment of the divine glory; and, beheld as we shall be in the face of Christ, of that love wherewith the Father hath loved Him.

But just as a believing sense on our part, of our being dead with Christ unto sin in the forensic sense of the phrase, leads, as we have already affirmed, to our being dead unto sin in the personal sense of the phrase, so as that we become dead in our regard for sin—in like manner, my brethren, a believing sense of our living with Christ in the forensic sense of the phrase, will lead to a living with Him in the personal sense of the phrase also. So as that the style and character of our life shall resemble His—loving what He loves, sharing with Him in His tastes and in His powers as well as in His privileges, walking along with Him in the very same track of happiness and glory—For which purpose it is altogether essential, that we be endued with a heart which delights in the very same pursuits, and feels the working and aspiration of the very same properties. Or, in other words, admitted as we are to rejoice with Him in that favour of God which He hath purchased by His obedience, we shall not have the conviction and the feeling of this, without also rejoicing with Him, even as He does now in beholding the character of God—in gazing with delight on the aspect of His pure and unspotted holiness—in copying upon our own spirits all those graces and virtues which we admire in His. So that to live with Christ in the fellow-

ship of those privileges which by His merit He has won, will bring in its train our living with Him in the fellowship of all that kindred excellence by which His person is adorned—being alive unto God, not merely in regard to our right through Christ to His friendship; but alive unto Him, in the restoration of a nature that is now attracted by the charm of His moral attributes, and finds both its delight and its dignity to live in the imitation of them.

There is a sure transition between our being justified by faith, and our being sanctified by faith. There is a provision made for this, in the mechanism of the moral nature of man below; and there is a provision made for it, in that celestial mechanism which has been set up in heaven—and from which there come down those holy influences, that serve to regenerate our world. Faith makes known to us the love of God, and upon this gratitude calls forth the love of the heart to Him back again. Faith reveals to us that exquisite union, which is held out in the gospel, between the awful and the lovely attributes of His nature; and the fear that hath torment being now allayed, and the consciousness of personal security being now established, we can, without dread and without disturbance, take an entire view of the Divinity, and add to the homage of our thanksgiving, the homage of a reverence that is free from terror, to such a full and finished glory. Faith opens to our sight the real character of heaven, in the sacredness of its angelic delights and its holy services—so that to rejoice in the hope of our living there, it is indispensable that

we should rejoice in the devices and the doings of saintliness here. Neither can we cherish the belief that we shall live with Christ, unless the kind of life that is held through eternity along with Him, be dear and congenial to our bosoms—so that grant the faith through which we obtain an interest in His righteousness to reside and operate within us, there are securities in the very constitution of the inner man, that we shall aspire after and at last attain unto holiness.

Yet however suited the mechanism of our hearts is, to this purifying operation of faith—it will not move, neither will it persevere in the movement, without a continued impulse from above; and, to secure this, there has been raised, if I may use the expression, a mechanism in heaven—by the working of which, a stream of living water is made to descend upon the moral nature of man, so as to attune all its emotions and desires to those of the spiritual nature of the upper paradise. In other words, there is a true sanctuary there, whereof Christ Himself is the minister, and it is His office, not merely to carry up the prayers of His people to Him who sitteth upon the throne, mixed with the acceptable odour of His own merits—but also to send down from the Holiest of Holies upon our world, that regenerating influence by which man is awakened to a new moral existence, and upheld in all the affections and in all the exercises of godliness. He is the prevailing Advocate, through whom our ascending supplications rise with acceptance to God. But He, the Lord from heaven, is also the quickening Spirit, through whom the light

and the heat of the sanctuary are made to descend upon us. It is thus that faith is deposited at the first; and it is thus that faith is upheld ever afterwards, in power to work within us all the feelings and all the fruits of righteousness. The Holy Ghost, that blessing so precious and so pre-eminent, as to be styled the promise of the Father—it was by His power and agency express, that Christ was revived, and His resurrection from the grave was accomplished; and, as if to fulfil and illustrate the saying of our Saviour that because I live ye shall live also, this very power has been committed to His mediatorial hand; and it is just by its working that He quickens us, who by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, into a spiritual resurrection. Thus are we made spiritually alive unto God, and walk in newness of life before Him. And if it be asked, how shall this virtue be brought to bear upon us, we answer that the prayer of faith will bring it down at any time—that with it the door of heaven's sanctuary is opened; and the required blessing passes with sure conveyance into that believer's heart, the door of which is open to receive it: And, such is the established accordancy between the doings of the upper sanctuary and the doings of the church upon earth, that every member thereof, who lives in the favour of God because of the righteousness of Christ imputed unto him, will live also in the love and likeness of God because of the holiness of the Spirit infused into him.

The only practical inference I shall at present insist upon, is founded on the connection that we have so abundantly adverted to, between the faith

of a sinner and his sanctification. The next verse will give us room for enlarging upon this all-important topic. But meanwhile be assured, that you may, with as much safety, confide the cause of your holiness upon earth to the exercise of believing, as you confide the cause of your happiness in heaven to this exercise. The primary sense of believing that we shall live with Christ, is, that, through His righteousness, we shall be admitted to that place of glory which He now occupies—there to spend with Him a blissful eternity; and according to this belief, if real, so shall it be done unto us. But in like manner also, let us just believe that we shall live with Him here, by entering even now upon the fellowship of those virtues which adorn His character, and of that Spirit which actuated the whole of His conduct; and according to this belief, if real, so shall it be done unto us. It is indeed to the eye of nature a most unlikely transformation, that creatures so prone as we are to sense and to ungodliness; and beset with the infirmities of our earthly tabernacle, and weighed down under that load of corruption wherewith these vile bodies are ever encumbering us, that we should break forth, even here into an atmosphere of sacredness, and inhale that spiritual life by which we become assimilated to the saints and the angels that now surround the throne of God. But the more unlikely this is to the eye of nature, so much the more glorious will be the victory of our faith, that it triumphs over the strength of an improbability so grievous. And if, like Abraham of old, we against hope believe in hope; and stagger not at the promise because of

unbelief, but are strong in faith giving glory to God—then, barren as we constitutionally are of all that is spiritually excellent, still, such is the influence of our faith over our sanctification, that, if there be truth in the promises of God, we shall be made to abound in the fruits of righteousness.

The best practical receipt I can give you, my brethren, for becoming holy is to be steadfast in the faith. Believe that Christ's righteousness is your righteousness; and His graces will become your graces. Believe that you are a pardoned creature; and this will issue in your becoming a purified creature. Take hold of the offered gift of Heaven; and you will not only enter, after death, on the future reversion of heaven's triumphs and heaven's joys—but before death, nay even now, will you enter upon the participation of heaven's feelings, and the practice of heaven's moralities. Go in prayer with the plea of Christ's atonement and His merits; and state, in connection with this plea, that what you want, is that you be adorned with Christ's likeness, and that you be assisted in putting on the virtues which signalised Him. And you will find the plea to be omnipotent; and the continued habit of such prayer, applied to all the exigencies of your condition, will enable you to substantiate the example of your Saviour, throughout all the varieties of providence and of history. In a word, faith is the instrument of sanctification. And when you have learned the use of this instrument, you have learned the way to become holy upon earth now, as well as the way to become eternally happy in heaven hereafter. The believing prayer that God will

aid you in this difficulty; and counsel you in this perplexity; and enable you to overcome in this trial of charity and patience; and keep up in your heart the principle of godliness, amid the urgency of all those seducing influences by which you are surrounded—this you will find, my brethren, to be the sure stepping-stone, to a right acquittal of yourself, in all the given circumstances of your condition in the world. And let the repeated experience of your constant failures, when you had nothing but the power and the energies of nature to trust to, shut you up unto the faith.

LECTURE XXXI.

ROMANS, vi, 11.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

We regard this verse as proof in itself, of the forensic meaning, which we have all along ascribed to the phrases of our being dead unto sin and alive unto God. The great object of this chapter, is to establish the alliance that there is, between a sinner's acceptance through Christ and a sinner's holiness. And in the verse before us, there is a practical direction given for carrying this alliance into effect. We are called upon to reckon of ourselves that we are dead unto sin, and alive unto God; and this is a step towards our becoming holy. Now what are we to reckon ourselves? why, if these phrases be taken in the personal sense of them—it would be that we are mortified to the pleasures and temptations of sin; and alive to nothing but the excellencies of God's character, and a sense of the obligations we are under to love and to honour Him: Or, in other words, we are to reckon ourselves holy in order that we may become holy. It were a strange receipt for curing a man of his dishonesty, to bid him reckon of himself that he is an honest man. One really does not see the charm and the operation of this expedient at all. One does not see, how, by the simple act of counting myself what I really am not, that I am to be

transferred from that which I am to that which I choose to imagine of myself. And a still more radical objection is, that it is bidding me reckon that to be true which I know to be false. It is bidding me cherish the belief of a thing that is not. It is calling, not upon my faith in a matter for which there is no evidence, but upon my imagination of a matter that is directly opposite to a reality of which I am conscious. To lay hold of a sinner and bid him reckon of himself that he is a saint, is to bid him admit into credit that which he knows to be untrue—and all for the purpose too of turning him from the creature that he feels he is, to the creature that he fancies he is. We have heard much of the power of imagination; but this is giving it an empire and an ascendancy that exceeds all which was before known or observed of our nature—besides the very obvious moral impropriety that there would be in an apostle telling, either an unconverted man to conceive of himself that which is most glaringly and notoriously untrue; or, if you will restrict the injunction of my text to disciples and believers, telling them to think what no humble Christian can possibly think of himself—that he is crucified unto the love of sin, and that all his felt and living desires are towards God and godliness.

Now you free the passage of all these difficulties, by taking these phrases according to the forensic interpretation that we have given them. To be dead unto sin, is to be in the condition of one on whom death the sentence of sin has already been inflicted—if not in his own person at least in that

of his representative; so that the execution for the transgression of the law is a matter that is now past and over. To be alive unto God is to live in the favour of God—a favour to which we have been admitted through the services of a Mediator, or, in the language of the text, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To reckon that Christ died for the one purpose, and to reckon that he brought in an everlasting righteousness for the other purpose —is to reckon, not on a matter of fancy, but on a matter proposed and that too on the evidence of God's own testimony to faith. It is not to cherish a delusive belief of what we are in ourselves, and that in the face of our own consciousness—it is to cherish a most solid and warrantable belief of what God has done for us, and that on the credit we place in His own intimation. Ere we can in our own minds bolster up the reckoning, that we are personally dead unto sin and personally alive unto God —there must be many misgivings; and sad failures and fluctuations of confidence, on the constant detections that we must be ever making of our own ungodliness. And at best it is a very precarious security indeed for holiness, if the way to become holy is to reckon that we are so. But when, instead of looking downwardly on the dark and ambiguous tablet of our own character, we look upwardly to that Saviour who now sitteth in exaltation, after having rendered the penalty of our disobedience and won for us the reward of life everlasting—we hold by a thing of historical fact, and not by a thing of deceitful imagination; we rest on the completeness of a finished expiation

and perfect obedience; and transfer our reckoning from a ground where conscience meets us and gives us the lie, to a ground occupied by the stable and enduring realities of Scripture—where God who cannot lie meets us with the assurances of His truth; and the voice of His kindness welcomes us to the deliverance of those who are dead with Christ, to the high and heavenly anticipations of those who are alive with Him.

When a sinner is bidden to reckon himself dead unto sin, and this phrase is understood personally, he is bidden to reckon himself a saint—to reckon what is not true; and surely this is not the way of causing him to be a saint. But when he is bidden to reckon himself dead unto sin, and this phrase is understood forensically, he is bidden look upon himself as a partaker with Christ in all the privileges and immunities of Him, on whom the sentence is already discharged and gone by; and to whom therefore there is no more condemnation. But it may be said, might not this be an untruth also? Do I read anywhere in the Bible, of Christ dying for me in particular? The apostle is speaking to his converts when he says, "Reckon yourselves dead unto sin." But is it competent to address any one individual at random, to reckon himself in this blessed condition of freedom from a penalty, that Christ hath intercepted and absorbed in behalf of all who believe on Him? Might not he in so reckoning be as effectually working himself up into the belief of a delusive imagination, as if he reckoned that he was a new creature—while all the

habits and tendencies of the old man still remained with him, in full and unabated operation?

Why, my brethren, it is no where said in the Bible that Christ died so for me in particular, as that by His simple dying the benefits of His atonement are mine in possession. But it is everywhere said in the Bible, that He so died for me in particular, as that by His simple dying, the benefits of His atonement are mine in offer. They are mine if I will. Such terms as *whosoever* and *all*, and *any*, and *ho*, *every one*, bring the gospel redemption specifically to my door; and there it stands for acceptance as mine in offer, and ready to become mine in possession on my giving credit to the word of the testimony. The terms of the gospel message are so constructed, that I have just as good a warrant for reckoning myself dead unto sin, as if, instead of the announcement that God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation for the sins of the world through faith in His blood, I had been the only sinner in the world; or I had been singled out by name and by surname, and it was stated that God had set forth Christ a propitiation for the sins of me individually; through faith in His blood. The act of reckoning myself dead unto sin through Christ, is just the act of receiving the truth of Christ's declaration,—according to the terms of the declaration. It is not reckoning on the truth of a falsehood. Were it a personal phrase, no doubt, it were reckoning that to be in the house, which is no where to be found within its limits. But it being a forensic phrase, it is just opening the door of the house; and suffering that to enter in which

is pressing upon it for admittance. Bid the sinner reckon in the former way; and you bid him feel that to be a reality within him, which has no existence. Bid him reckon in the latter way; and you bid him fetch from the abiding realities which are without, a conviction that will carry light and peace and comfort into his bosom—you bid him close with the overtures of the gospel—you bid him appropriate to himself what is said of the power of Christ's blood, and the purpose and effect of His sacrifice. But it is not an appropriation which carries him beyond the exercise of a legitimate faith—because not an appropriation beyond the real meaning and application of the terms, that I have just adverted to. By reckoning himself personally dead unto sin, and personally alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, he would outrun the reckoning of his own conscience. But by reckoning himself forensically dead unto sin, and forensically alive unto God, he does not outrun the reckoning of the Bible. He gathers no more out of the field of revelation, than what he finds to be lying upon its surface; and laid there too, just that he may fall in with it and take it home. Without the terms, 'whosoever,' and 'all,' and 'any,' and 'ho, every one,' it might not have been so; but, with these terms, he may reckon of himself that forensically he is dead with Christ—and yet believe no further, than the terms in question give him the fullest warrant for.

And what is more. You will not acquire a virtuous character, by barely imagining that you have it when you have it not. But there is another

way, in which it is conceivable that a virtuous character may be acquired. Not by any false reckoning about your actual character; but by a true reckoning about your actual condition. A mistaken sense as to the principle that inspires your heart, will never be the mean of bringing a right principle there. But a correct and habitual sense as to the place you occupy, may, by its moral influence on the feelings, have the effect both of introducing and of nourishing the right principle. It is not by imagining I am a saint, that I will become so; but by reflecting on the condemnation due to me as a sinner—on the way in which it has been averted from my person—on the passage by which, without suffering to myself, I have been borne across the region of vindictive justice, and conclusively placed on the fair and favoured shore of acceptance with God—The sense and the reckoning of all this, may transform me from the sinner that I am, into the saint that I am not. The executed criminal, who has been galvanized into life again, may be sent forth upon society; and there exposed to the temptation of all his old opportunities. It is not by reckoning of himself, that he is now altogether dead to the power of these temptations—it is not by reckoning himself to be an honest man, that he will become so. It is not by reckoning falsely of his character, that he will change it into something different; but by reckoning truly of his condition, he may bring a moral consideration to bear upon his heart, that will transform his character. How shall I who for theft have passed through the hands of the execu-

tioner, recur to the very practice that destroyed me? And how, in like manner, says the believer, shall I who have virtually undergone this sentence of the law, that the soul which sinneth it shall die —how shall I, now that I have been made alive again, continue in that hateful thing, of whose malignant tendencies in itself, and of whose utter irreconcilableness to the will and character of God, I have, in the death of my representative and my surety, obtained so striking a demonstration? It is not the sense or reckoning that you are a sanctified man—it is not thus that the work of sanctification is done. It is the sense or reckoning that you are a justified man—it is this which has the sanctifying influence—it is this which does the work, or is the instrument of doing it.

Mark then, my brethren, the apostle's receipt for holiness. It is not that you reckon yourself already pure; but it is that you reckon yourself already pardoned. It is not that you feel as if the fetters of corruption have as yet been struck off; but that you feel as if altogether lightened and released from the fetters of condemnation, and that you may go forth in the peace and joy of a reconciled creature. And somehow or other, this, it would appear, is the way of arriving at the new spirit and the new life of a regenerated creature. And how it should fall with the efficacy of a charm on a sinner's ear, when told, that the first stepping-stone towards that character of heaven after which he has been so hopelessly labouring, is to assure himself that all the guilt of his past ungodliness is now done away—that the ransom of iniquity is

paid—and that by a death the pains of which were never felt, the penalties of that law he so oft has broken shall never reach him. It is indeed levelling the mountains, and making the crooked paths straight, when such a high way of access is thrown across the gulph of separation that is between sin and sacredness; and never, my brethren, will this transition be made good,—never will the sinner know what it is to taste of spiritual joys, or to breathe with kindred delight in a spiritual atmosphere, till, buried in another's death, and raised in another's righteousness than his own, he can walk with the confident peace of one who knows that he is safe, under the secure and ample canopy of the offered Mediatorship.

So that the apostle tells us here, and in the imperative mood, to reckon that our death by sin is over and gone by; and this too, you will observe, for the purpose of bringing about our sanctification. What a powerful and practical outset does he afford to his career? He dreads no antinomianism. He fearlessly bids the people to count, that one man has died for them all; and he bids them habitually reckon upon this, recur to it, keep it in memory, always be acting and holding fast the confidence that they begun with, and not cast it away. The man who is called upon to reckon that he was dead unto sin personally, would often feel as if out of his reckoning; and many a misgiving would visit him; and he might thus spend his life in the tossings of anxiety. But the man who is called upon to reckon that he is dead unto sin forensically, is presented with a solid foundation in that

which Christ hath done for him; is simply bidden count upon that as a settled point, which has indeed been settled fast; and, when like to be abandoned by hope, he has only to feel for the solidity of his ground, and, in so doing, will find that it is a rock of strength which he has got to stand upon. And all this as the first step to a life of new obedience. All this as a primary command, among those which the apostle afterwards delivers, for the purpose of securing our transition from sin unto holiness. All this as a staff to support us on the narrow way of discipline and duty, as provision for our journey to the land of uprightness. And what I bid you remark in the first place, is the very peculiar instrument which the apostle puts into the hands of his disciples, for the purpose of making them regenerated creatures,—even a trusty reckoning, on their part, that they are already reconciled creatures; and what an evidence here of God's desire that you should feel at peace from the apprehension of His wrath, when it is this very peace that He proposes as the means of making you the partakers of the worth and purity of His nature!

But, in the second place, will the means be really effectual? It was so with Paul. He gloried not in himself—not in his crucifixion to sin—not in his resurrection to holiness; he gloried in the cross of Christ, and the crucifixion to sin came out of this glorying. Thereby the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world. The personal result came out of the forensic reckoning; and not a believer after him, who will not experience the same result out of the same reckoning. Your business

is to count of yourselves, that in Christ your condemnation is discharged; that in Him your acceptance is granted. And the more steadfastly and constantly you keep by this business, the more certainly will you find to your blessed experience, that a new heart and a new history emerge from the doing of it. The hourly habit of reflecting upon the new condition in which Christ has placed you, will sustain an hourly influence, by which there shall germinate and grow the new character that Christ proposes should arise in you. You have laboured long perhaps, after the life of God and of heaven in the soul; but this is just because you have been labouring long in the wrong track, or with wrong instruments. Turn you now unto that doctrine, which is as much the power of God unto sanctification here as unto salvation hereafter; and know, from this time forward, that the way of reaching the life of holiness you aspire after, is to live a life of faith in the Son of God.

I have already adverted to some of the moral influences, wherewith the consideration of our having been as good as dead for sin, is so abundantly pregnant; and even with a reiteration that might have fatigued, and over satiated some of you, did I, in remarking on the second verse, expatiate at great length on what struck me as the first of these influences. It is the same with that which may be addressed to a man, who has been put to death for a crime, and then made alive again. A most impressive lesson to him, of the genius and character of that government under which he lives; of its hostility to the wickedness for which he suffered;

of its intolerance for a transgression, into which if he again fall, there may be no mercy and no readmittance from the sentence that will be surely in reserve for him. And, in like manner, the sinner, who, through Christ, has been restored from condemnation, learns, both in the sentence that was incurred, and in the atonement that was rendered, what a repulsion there is between sin and sacredness; and how, if the character of God be the same that it ever was, he, in sinning wilfully, dares over again the still unquelled antipathies of the Godhead —and, that if he gives himself up to the old service, which reduced him at first from the one rightful authority, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary. God forbid, that we should continue in sin, that grace may abound—or, because we have been brought back again within the limits of God's beloved family, we should fetch along with us that which before had banished us forth of a domain—from which sin, of all other things, must be rooted out, because sin of all other things is that which most sorely and most grievously offendeth.

But he does not know all, if he only know of that inheritance to which he has been readmitted, that no sin is suffered to have occupancy there. This is only knowing the quality of that which is exiled from heaven's family; but it is not knowing the quality of that, which is welcomed and cherished, and carried to uttermost perfection there. It is only giving me to understand the character of the outcast; but it is not giving me to understand

the character of the guest. By being dead with Christ, the door of entry is again opened for me into the great household of the blest; and it is well to be solemnised into the impression, that I must shun the hateful thing which banished me therefrom. But I should also be led to aspire, and with all my earnestness, after that estimable thing which stamps the character and constitutes the honour and the delight of this rejoicing family. The disgraced felon, whose frauds had expelled him from society, when again introduced within its limits, is furnished by all his recollections with a strong and actuating motive, to put all the atrocities of his former life away from him; but not only so,—by his strenuous cultivation of the opposite virtues—by the scrupulous integrity of his dealings—by the high-minded disdain, in which he should hold even the slightest deviations from the path of honour—by the sensitive nicety of an uprightness, on which no discernible flaw can be detected—he might regain a distinguished place in that living circle, the esteem and happiness of which he had before forfeited; and reach a status of positive credit and enjoyment, in room of that ignominy which before had covered him. And the same of heaven on the other side of death, and also of the road which leads to heaven on this side of death—the same of the habit and condition of paradise hereafter; and the same most assuredly of the habit of preparation for paradise here. He who is dead with Christ, and so freed from condemnation, is not ushered at once into the celestial regions: but he is forthwith set on the journey which leads to them. And, with

his eye full on the moral and spiritual glories of the place that is above, he will learn that sinlessness is not enough—that he must be strenuous in the pursuit of positive goodness—that to lay up treasure in heaven, he must become rich in all those graces that adorn and dignify the wearer—that to be received and welcomed as a member of the upper family, he must acquire the family likeness; or gather upon his inner man all those features of piety and love and humbleness and temperance and purity, which go to make up a portrait of affirmative excellence, and to stamp on every desire and on every doing the expression of holiness unto the Lord.

The starting-post at which this race of virtue begins, and from which this noble career of progressive and aspiring excellence is entered on, is your freedom from condemnation, through the death of Christ. It is your reckoning by faith upon this, which cuts asunder that load, by which the compressed and heavy-laden energies of the soul are restrained from bursting forth on a path of hopeful activity; and it is thus, that, with emancipated powers now awakened to life and to liberty, you press onward to that summit of perfection that is yet seen by you from afar, but to which you have bent your determined course, and are ever running, as for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord. But to our progress on this great moral and spiritual journey, the reckoning of the text is indispensable. Without this reckoning, you are chained to the sluggishness of despair. With this reckoning the chain is broken; and the sluggishness is dissipated; and

the faculties of the mind are not only freed, but they are urged and stimulated in a holy and a heavenward direction. For, among the thousand other guarantees for the faith of the gospel being indeed a purifying and an inspiring faith, mark it, my brethren, that a sense of pardon will never enter believingly into the sinner's heart, without its being followed up by a sense of obligation; and gratitude to Him who first loved you, will incite you to all that you know to be gladdening or acceptable to His bosom: And when you read, that He wants to rear all those creatures who are the travail of His soul, into so many illustrious specimens of that power with which He is invested—to adorn and to sanctify those whom He has saved—how can you refuse to be a fellow-worker with Him, in striving, by all the aids of His grace, to apprehend that holiness, for the sake of producing which in your spirit, you have been apprehended? How can you refuse to gratify in your own person and performance, the taste of Him who ever rejoices to behold the verdure and the beauty that sit on the landscapes of materialism; and will much more rejoice to behold in the church of the redeemed, on which He is ever shedding the water of life from above, the unspotted loveliness of a new moral creation, that now teems and rises towards that full accomplishment, when it shall be holy and without blemish before Him?

Thus it is that the desire of Christ, and your desire, meet together in the one object of your sanctification. Let the sinner's desire for this vent itself in prayer; and let the desire of the

Saviour for this go forth upon the prayer, and hand it up perfumed with the incense of His own merits to Him who sitteth on the throne; and the descending of the Spirit on the believer's heart, will make sure that regenerating process, whereby he who is saved from the punishment of sin, will also most certainly be saved from its power. The man, who, in the faith of God's testimony, reckons himself a partaker of Christ's death and resurrection, is not reckoning beyond his warrant. But he who so reckons upon Christ hath received Christ; and the mighty vantage ground upon which he stands is, that he can now plead the declaration of God Himself, that as He hath given His own Son He will also with Him freely give all things; and the most precious of these, are the heart and the power to serve Him. It is thus that, through the door of reconciliation, you enter on the path of new obedience; and still we come back again to this, that the very reckoning of my text, is the thing which gives its first prosperous outset to the work of sanctification. It is this which brings home to the believer's heart, the malignity of sin—it is this which opens to him the gate of heaven; and, disclosing to his view the glories of that upper region, teaches him that it is indeed a land of sacredness—it is this which inclines his footsteps along the path to immortality, which the death of Christ and it alone has rendered accessible—it is this which conforms his character to that of the celestial spirits who are there before Him—For the will of Christ, whom he now loves, is, that he should be like unto Him; and the grate-

ful wish and grateful endeavour of the disciple, draw forth from his labouring bosom that prayer of faith, which is sure to rise with acceptance, and is sure to be answered with power.

To conclude, I shall be pleased, if, as the fruit of all these explanations, I have succeeded in making palpable to any understanding, the great secret of what that is which constitutes the principle of evangelical obedience. The constant aim and tendency of nature is towards a legal obedience; and, in the prosecution of this, it is sure to land either in a spiritless formality, or in a state of fatigue and dissatisfaction and despondency, which, without the faith of the gospel, is utterly interminable. To believe in Christ, is the way to be holy here, as well as the way to be happy hereafter. A sense of peace with God through Him, when it enters the bosom, is the sure harbinger of purity there; and what you have plainly to do, that you may attain to the character of heaven, is to take up the reckoning of my text—even that the death by sin is conclusively gone through; and that, the life by God being promised through Jesus Christ, the gate of heaven now stands open for your approaches through the way of holiness which leads to it. You have perhaps been practising at the work of reformation by other methods; and this is a method that may have been still untried by you. Try it now; and what can be more inviting, than to begin an enterprise with such an encouragement of friendship and of patronage upon your side? The man who sets out on the track of legalism, proposes to win this friendship by his obedience and to secure

his patronage. But the man who sets out evangelically, counts on the friendship and the patronage as already his, and avails himself of all the aids and facilities that are abundantly offered to him. Make the experiment, my brethren. Take it up as a settled point, that in Christ your condemnation is done away—that in Him your right to everlasting life is purchased and secured for you—that all the signals of honest and welcome invitation are now lifted up; and, floating in the eye even of the worst of sinners, are cheering him forward to the land of uprightness—and that every influence is provided, to help his movement from the character of that earth whence he is so soon to make an everlasting departure, to the character of that now open and accessible heaven whither he is asked to bend his footsteps. Enter upon this undertaking on the footing that your reconciliation is secured, and not on the footing that your reconciliation is yet to win. On the one footing you will fight all your days, at a distance from hope, and at an utterly impracticable distance from that heaven after which you are toiling so fruitlessly. Just make the attempt then on the other footing; and see whether all old things will not be done away, and all things will not become new.

LECTURE XXXIII.

ROMANS, vi, 12.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

Some would substitute here, in place of mortal, which signifies liable to death, the idea of our bodies being already dead in Christ; or in Him being already put to death for sin—which would just be urging us to strive against sin, and on the consideration too that I have in your hearing so repeatedly insisted upon. Let not that hateful enemy again reign over us, who already brought us to the borders of execution. And here, I may revert for a moment to the thought, that sin, by the death of Christ in our stead, hath been plucked of its sting—that our Saviour received it in His own body, and there is no more power in our cruel adversary to inflict its mortal poison upon us—and that he is not only disarmed of his right to condemn us, but furthermore disarmed of all right and ability to tyrannise over us. In virtue of the defeat that he has gotten, he will not obtain the dominion over our hearts and wills unless we let him. If we let him not; we shall find that our resistance, backed as it is by the plea of a Saviour already crucified, and by the power of a Saviour now exalted, is greatly too much for him. We who have been baptized into Christ, are somewhat in the same circumstances with regard to our old oppressor sin

—that the children of Israel, after being baptized into Moses in the Red sea, were, in reference to the power and tyranny of Egypt. Their enemy was engulphed in that abyss, over which they found an open and a shielded way; and, placed conclusively beyond the reach of his dominion, it was now their part to exchange the mastery of Pharaoh for the mastery of God; and those who did not acquit themselves of this their part, but rebelled against Heaven, and sighed in their hearts after the flesh-pots of Egypt, were cut off in the wilderness. And these things are recorded for our admonition, on whom the latter ends of the world have come. If truly baptized into Christ, we have, with Him our Deliverer, passed athwart that mighty chasm which had been else impassable; and it was in the act of opening up and traversing this deep, that he who had the power of death was overthrown; and we, now placed beyond the reach of his inflictions, are to exchange the tyranny of sin for the rightful command and mastery of Him, who hath borne us across from the confines of the enemy; and unless we let him, he is stript of all power of ascendancy over us—being no more able to subjugate our hearts to the influence of moral evil, than he is able to subjugate our persons to its penalty. Now, if he offer to reign, let us but resist, and he will flee from us—whereas, if with so many aids and securities around us, and standing on the vantage ground of a safety that has thus been obtained and thus been guaranteed, we shall still find our inclinations towards this malignant destroyer, we shall share in the fate of the rebellious Hebrews, we shall

fall short on our way to the heavenly Canaan, we shall be likened to those who fell in the wilderness.

And this analogy, which has been instituted by Paul himself in another part of his writings, does not fail us—though we should take the term mortal in the customary, which I am also inclined to think is here the correct signification of it. While in these mortal bodies, we are only on a road through the wilderness of earth, to the secure and everlasting blessedness of heaven. It is true that all who are really partakers with Christ in His death, have got over a mighty barrier, that lay between this terrestrial Egypt and the Jerusalem that is above. They have been carried through the strait gate of acceptance, and have now to travel along the narrow way of duty and of discipline. It is most true of all who are actually through the one, that they will be borne in safety and in triumph along the other. But one may think that he is in Christ, when he is not; and therefore let him who thus thinketh that he standeth, take heed lest he fall. If in Christ, it is true, that to him there will be no condemnation. But if in Christ, it is just in every way as true, that he will walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Let us therefore make sure of our condition by so walking. Let us give all our diligence to ascertain and establish it. If we really are at a distance from the land of sin's condemnation, we are at an equal distance from the land of sin's thraldom and oppressive tyranny. Let us count it our business then to make head against that tyranny. Let not sin reign over us, on the passage that we have yet to

describe, ere we shall be translated to our place of secure and eternal refuge from all its entanglements. Let us stifle every rising inclination for the pleasures and the carnalities of Egypt, and come not under the power of those lusts which war against the soul, till we reach the spiritual Canaan, where every inclination to evil that we have withstood here, shall cease to exist and so cease to annoy us.

We hold it of prime importance, in the business of practical Christianity that we understand well the kind of work which is put into our hands, both that we may go rightly about it, and also that we may have the comfort of judging whether it is actually making progress under our exertions. A mistake on this point may lead us perhaps to waste our efforts on that which is impracticable; and when these efforts of course turn out to be fruitless, may lead us to abandon our spirits to utter despondency; and thus, to use the language of the apostle Paul—running as uncertainly, and fighting as one that beateth the air, we may spend our days, alike strangers to peace, and to progressive holiness.

Now to save us from this hurtful mistake it were well that we weighed the vast import of certain terms in the verse before us which are altogether big with significancy. 'Let not sin,' says the apostle, 'reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.' Here we cannot fail to perceive how widely diverse the injunction of the apostle would have been, if instead of saying, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies,' he had said, Let sin be rooted out of your mortal

bodies; or if, instead of saying, Obey not its lusts, he had bid us eradicate them. It were surely a far more enviable state to have no inclination to evil at all, than to be oppressed with the constant forth-putting of such an inclination, and barely to keep it in check, under the power of some opposing principle. Could we attain the higher state, on this side of time, we would become on earth, what angels are in heaven, whose every desire runs in the pure current of love and loyalty to a God of holiness. But if doomed to the lower state, during all the days of our abode in the world, then are we given to understand, that the life of a Christian is a life of vigilant and unremitting warfare—that it consists in the struggle of two adverse elements, and the habitual prevalence of one of them—that in us, and closely around us, there is a besetting enemy who will not quit his hold of us, till death paralyse his grasp, and so let us go—and that, from this sore conflict of the Spirit lusting against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit, we shall not be conclusively delivered, till our present tainted materialism shall be utterly taken down; and that the emancipated soul shall not have free and unconfined scope for its heavenly affections, until it has burst its way from the prison-hold of its earthly tabernacle.

Now, this view of the matter gives us a different conception of our appointed task from what may often be imagined. Sin, it would appear, is not to be exterminated from our mortal bodies; it is only to be kept at bay. It is not to be destroyed in respect of its presence, but it is to be repressed in its prevalency and in its power. It will ever dwell,

it would appear, in our present framework; but though it dwell, it may not have the dominion. Let us try then to banish it; and defeated in this effort, we may give up in heartless despair the cause of our sanctification, thus throwing away at once both our peace and our holiness. But let us try to dethrone it, though we cannot cast it out; and succeeding in this effort, while we mourn its hateful company, we may both keep it under the control of strictest guardianship, and calmly look onward to the hour of death, as the hour of release from a burden that will at least adhere to us all our days, though it may not overwhelm us.

We see then the difference between a saint in heaven, and a saint upon earth. The former may abandon himself to such feelings and such movements as come at pleasure; for he has no other pleasure than to do the will of God, and to rejoice in the contemplation of His unspotted glory. The latter cannot with safety so abandon himself. It is true, that there is an ingredient in his nature, now under an advancing process of regeneration, which is altogether on the side of godliness; and were this left unresisted by any opposing influence, he might be spared all the agonies of dissolution, and set him down at once among the choirs and the companies of paradise. But there is another ingredient of his nature, still under an unfinished process of regeneration, and which is altogether on the side of ungodliness; and were this left without the control of his new and better principle, sin would catch the defenceless moment, and regain the ascendancy from which she had been disposted.

Now it is death which comes in as the deliverer. It is death which frees away the incumbrance. It is death which overthrows and grinds to powder that corrupt fabric on the walls of which were inscribed the foul marks of leprosy; and the inmost materials of which were pervaded with an infection, that nothing, it seems, but the sepulchral process of a resolution into dust, and a resurrection into another and glorified body, can clear completely and conclusively away. It is death that conducts us from the state of a saint on earth, to the state of a saint in heaven: but not till we are so conducted, are we safe to abandon ourselves for a single instant to the spontaneity of our own inclinations; and we utterly mistake our real circumstances in the world—we judge not aright of what we have to do, and of the attitude in which we ought to stand—we lay ourselves open to the assaults of a near and lurking enemy, and are exposed to most humiliating overthrows, and most oppressive visitations of remorse and wretchedness, if, such being our actual condition upon earth, we go to sleep, or to play among its besetting dangers; if we ever think of the post that we occupy being any other than the post of armour and of watchfulness; or, falsely imagining that there is but one spiritual ingredient in our nature, altogether on the side of holiness, instead of two, whereof the other is still alive, and on the side of sin, we ever let down the guardianship, and the jealousy, and the lowliness of mind, and the prayers for succour from on high, which such a state of things so urgently and so imperiously demands.

We think it of very capital importance for us to know that the body wherewith we are burdened, and must carry about with us, is a vile body; that the nature which we received at the first, and from which we shall not be delivered on this side of the grave, is a corrupt nature; that all which is in us, and about us, and that is apart from the new spirit infused through the belief of the gospel, is in a state of aversion to the will of God; that what may be denoted by the single word *carnality*, is of perpetual residence with us while upon earth; and that our distinct concern is, while it resides with us, that it shall not reign over us. It is ever present with it suggestions; and this we cannot help: but it should not prevail with its suggestions; and this, by the aids and expedients provided for the regeneration of a polluted world, we may help. We shall feel with our latest breath, the motions of the flesh; and these motions, if not sins, are at least sinful tendencies, which, if yielded to, would terminate in sins. Now our business is not to extirpate the tendencies, but to make our stand against them—not to root out those elements of moral evil which the body of a good man before death has, and after its resurrection has not—but to stifle, and to keep them down by that force wherewith the new creature in Jesus Christ is armed for the great battle, on the issue of which hangs his eternity. We cannot obtain such a victory as that we shall never feel the motions of the flesh; but we may obtain such a victory, as that we shall not walk after the flesh. The enemy is not so skilled as that we are delivered from his

presence; but by an unremitting strenuousness on our part, we may keep him so chained as that we shall be delivered from his power. Such is the contest, and such is the result of the contest, if it be a successful one. But we ought to be told, that it is a vain hope, while we live in the world, to look for the extermination of the sinful principle. It ever stirs and actuates within us; and there is not one hour of the day, in which it does not give token that it is still alive, and though cast down from its ascendancy, not destroyed in its existence. Forewarned, forearmed, and it is right to be informed, that near us, and within us, there is at all times an insidious foe, against whom we cannot guard too vigilantly, and against whom we cannot pray too fervently and too unremittingly.

The time is coming, when, without the felt counteraction of any adverse and opposing tendency, we shall expatiate in freedom over the realms of ethereal purity and love—just as the time is coming, when the chrysalis shall burst with unfettered wing from the prison in which it is now held; and where, we doubt not, that it is aspiring and growing into a meetness for traversing at large the field of light and air that is above it. The Christian on earth so aspires and so grows; but Christian though he be, there is on him the heaviness of a gross and tainted materialism, which must be broken down ere his spiritual tendencies can expand into their full and final development. Meanwhile, there is the compression upon him of downward, and earthward, and carnal tendencies, which will never be removed till he die; but which he must resist, so

as that they shall not reign over him. There are lusts which he cannot eradicate, but which he must not obey; and, while he deplores, in humility and shame, the conscious symptoms within him of a nature so degraded, it is his business, by the energies and resources of the new nature, so to starve and weaken and mortify the old, as that it may linger into decay while he lives, and when he dies may receive the stroke of its full annihilation.

This representation of a believer's state upon earth is in accordancy with Scripture. We find the apostle stating, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and in such a way too, as that the man cannot do what he would. He would serve God more perfectly. He would render him an offering untinctured by the frailty of his fallen nature. He would rise to the seraphic love of the upper paradise, and fain be able to consecrate to the Eternal, the homage of a heart so pure that no earthly feculence shall be felt adhering to it. But all this he cannot—and why? Because of a drag that keeps him, with all his soaring aspirations, among the dust of a perishable world. There is a counterpoise of secularity within, that at least damps and represses the sacredness; and it is well that it do not predominate over it. This secularity belongs to the old nature, being so very corrupt that Paul says of it—"In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." There is a law, then, which warreth against the law of our mind, even while that mind is delighting inwardly in the law of God. The conflict is so exceedingly severe, that even they who have the first

fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly, while waiting for the redemption of the body, and for a translation into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Burdened with the mass of a rebellious nature, the apostle exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Even grace, it would appear, does not deliver from the residence of sin; for Paul complains most emphatically of his vile body, and, we have no doubt, would so have stigmatized it to the last half hour of his existence in the world. But grace still does something. It delivers from the reign of sin, so as that we do not obey its motions, though vexed and annoyed with the feeling of them. And accordingly, from the exclamation of "O wretched man!" does he pass in a moment to the grateful exclamation of, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," in whom it is that we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

From such a representation as is given by the apostle of Indwelling Sin, we may deduce some distinct practical lessons, which may be of use to the believer.

First, we think it conducive to the peace of a believer, that he is made aware of what he has to expect of the presence of corruption during his stay in this the land of immature virtue; and where the holiness of the new-born creature has to struggle its way through all those adverse elements, which nought but death will utterly remove from him. It must serve to allay the disturbance of his spirit, when pierced and humbled under the consciousness of an evil desire and wicked principle

still lurking within him, and announcing themselves to be yet alive, by the instigations which they are ever prompting, and the thoughts which they are ever suggesting to the inner man. It is his business to resist the instigations, and to turn away from the thoughts; and thus the old nature may be kept in practical check, though as to its being, it is not exterminated. Yet the very occurrence of a sinful desire, or an impure feeling, harasses a delicate conscience; for no such occurrence happens to an angel, or to the spirit of a just man made perfect, in heaven; and he may be led to suspect his interest in the promises of Christ, when he is made to perceive that there is in him still so much of what is uncongenial to godliness. It may therefore quiet him to be told, that he is neither an angel nor a glorified saint; and that there is a distinction between the saint who is struggling at his appointed warfare below, and the saint who is resting and rejoicing in the full triumph of his victory above; and the distinction announces itself just by the very intimations which so perplex and so grieve him—just by the felt nearness of that corrupt propensity which is the plague of his heart, which it is his bounden duty to keep his guard against, and which, with his new-born sensibilities, on the side of holiness, he will detest and mourn over—but not to be overwhelmed in despair, on account of, as if some strange thing had happened to him, or as if any temptation had come in his way which was not common to all his brethren who are in the world.

But, secondly, this view of the matter not only

serves to uphold the peace of a believer, but conduces also to his progress in holiness; for it leads to a most wholesome distrust of himself, under the consciousness that there is still a part about him most alive to sin; and which, if not watched and guarded and kept under severe and painful restraint, would be wholly given over to it. And here there is a striking accordancy between the theoretical view which the Bible gives of our nature, and the practical habit it labours to impress upon all who partake of it. An angel, perhaps, does not need to be warned against the exposure of himself to temptation; for there may be no ingredient in his constitution that can be at all affected by it: but not so with man, compounded as he is, and made up as his constitution is here, of two great departments, one of which is prone to evil, and that continually; and in the other of which lie all those principles and powers whose office it is, if not utterly to extinguish this proneness, at least to repress its outbreakings. In these circumstances, it is positively not for man to thrust himself into a scene of temptation; and when the alternative is at his own will, whether he shall shun the encounter, or shall dare it, his business is to shun, and the whole of Scripture is on the side of cautiousness, rather than of confidence in this matter; and we may be assured, that it is our part, in every case, to expose nothing, and to hazard nothing, unless there be a call of duty, which is tantamount to a call of Providence. When the trial is of our own bringing on, we have no warrant to hope for a successful issue. God will grant succour and support against the onsets

which temptation maketh upon us, but He does not engage Himself to stand by us in the presumptuous onsets which we make upon temptation. We better consult the mediocrity of our powers, and better suit our habits to the real condition of our ruined and adulterated nature, when we keep as far as in us lies our determined distance from every allurement—when with all our might we restrain our tendencies to evil within, from coming into contact with the excitements to evil that are without—when we make a covenant with our eyes to turn them away from the sight of vanity—and whether the provocation be to anger, or evil speaking, or intemperance, or any wayward and vicious indulgence whatever, let us be assured, that we cannot be too prompt in our alarms, or too early in our measures, whether of prevention or resistance; and that in every one instance where we have it in our power, and no dereliction of duty is implied by it, it is our wise and salutary part, not most resolutely to face the provocative, but most resolutely to flee from it.

But, thirdly, this view of the matter not only leads us to withdraw the vicious and wrong part of our constitution from every encounter with temptation that can possibly be shunned—it also leads us to such measures as may recruit and strengthen the gracious or good part of our constitution for every such encounter as cannot be shunned. For we must, in spite of all our prudence, have many such encounters in the world. Temptation will come to our door, though we should never move a single unguarded footstep towards temptation; and

then, What, we would ask, is the armour or resistance?—what the best method of upholding the predominance of the good principle over the evil one? We would say, a fresh commitment of ourselves in faith and in prayer to Him who first put the good principle into our hearts—another act of recurrence to the fulness that is in Christ Jesus—a new application for strength from the Lord our Sanctifier, to meet this new occasion for strength which He Himself has permitted to come in our way, and to cross the path of our history in the world. The humility which leads us to flee whenever we can, and to pray when flight is impossible—this is the very habit of the soul, which removes it from the first set of temptations, and will most effectually strengthen it against the second. To the proud man, who reckons upon his own capabilities, God refuses grace. To the humble man, who in himself has no other feeling than that of utter emptiness, God gives grace in abundant measure for all his necessities: and thus it is, that by proceeding as he ought, on the consideration that there is a part of his nature belonging properly and originally to himself, which he must keep at an assiduous distance from every excitement to evil; and then proceeding as he ought, on the consideration that there is a part of his nature derived by grace from heaven, and nourished by constant supplies from the same quarter—thus it is, we say, that his knowledge of his own constitution, such as we have endeavoured to unfold it, has a direct tendency both to deepen the humility of the believer, and to exalt and perfect his holiness.

It is this state of composition, in every one who has been born of the Spirit, between the old man and the new creature, which explains the mystery of a Christian being more humble, just as he becomes more holy—of his growing at one and the same time in dissatisfaction with himself, and in those deeds of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ—of his being both more feelingly alive to the corruption that is in him from one part of his nature, and more fruitfully abundant in all those virtues which have their soil and their nutriment from the other part of his nature, so as to hold out the palpable exhibition of one evidently rising in positive excellence, and yet as evidently sinking into a profounder self-abasement than before; as if it required a so much deeper foundation to uphold the ascending superstructure. The truth is, that wherever there is any real growth of morality, there must be a growth of moral sensibility along with it; and in proportion to this sensibility will there be the annoyance that is felt, and the touching grief and humility wherewith the heart is visited on every fresh evolution of that depraved nature, which is only subordinated, but not yet extinguished and done away. And hence the want of sympathy, and the want of understanding between the children of this world, and the children of light; and the misinterpretation that is sometimes given to the pains and perplexities and mental disquietudes which the latter do experience; and the puzzling appearance of inconsistency which is held out by the emotions and the exercises of a real Christian, who is troubled on every side, yet

not distressed—perplexed, but not in despair—persecuted, but not forsaken—cast down, but not destroyed—Bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in his body—dying unto earthly honours and earthly gratifications, while the life of Jesus is becoming manifest in his mortal flesh.

To conclude then, let sin reside as it may, he must not be permitted to reign. He may be put up with as a most offensive and unpleasant inmate in the house—but let him be curbed and guarded, and not one item of authority be conceded to him. It is enough that one has to bear his hateful presence, but his tyranny is not to be tolerated. Against this there is ever to be upheld a manful, and strenuous, and persevering resistance. He may distress, but he is not to influence us. There will be a constant prompting on his part to that which is evil; but the evil thing is not to be done, and the desire which incites to that thing is not to be obeyed. This is the strong and visible line of demarcation between the wilful sinner and the aspiring saint. Both of them have vile bodies charged with the elements of corruption, and impregnated with a moral virus, the working of which is towards sin and ungodliness. Both have one and the same constitutional tendency. But the one follows that tendency, the other resists it; and as the fruit of that resistance, though not freed from its detested presence, he is at least emancipated from its domineering power. It lives in the house, but it is not master of the house; and is there so starved and buffeted, and subjected to such perpetual thwarting

and mortification of every sort, that it gradually languishes and becomes weaker, and at length, with the life of the natural body, it utterly expires. The soul which acquiesced in its dominion has been sowing all along to the flesh, and of the flesh it shall reap corruption. The soul that struggled against its dominion, and refused compliance therewith, has through the Spirit, mortified the deeds of the body, and shall live,—has all along been sowing to the Spirit, and of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting.

LECTURE XXXIV.

ROMANS, vi, 13, 14.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

You will observe in the term 'yield' of the present verse, a counterpart to the term 'reign' of the last verse. We have not been enjoined to root out sin as to its presence; but we have been enjoined so to resist, as that it shall not reign over us in power. And in like manner we are not called upon to exscind from our members their evil tendency to unrighteousness; but we are called upon not to yield them up as instruments of unrighteousness. Could Paul have exscinded from his members their inclination to sin, he would have done it; and then, he would not have had to complain afterwards in the bitterness of his soul, that he found a law in these members, warring against the law of his mind —neither would he have said that in him, that is in his flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. But the truth is, that, after conversion, the organs of the body stand in the same relation as before to the objects that are suited to them—the natural influence of the one upon the other is just what it was—there is a power of temptation in the one, and a disposition to coalesce therewith in the other, neither of which is extricated by grace, either from

the constitution of the man, or from the constitution of outward nature. But what grace does, is, to stir up a resolve in the mind against submitting to this influence, against yielding to this temptation. And so there comes to be a law in the mind, warring against the law that is in the members—a new will that aspires, if not to such a sovereignty as can carry into effect a sentence of expulsion against the evil desires that are in the members, at least to such a sovereignty as shall lay upon these desires an effectual negative—So that if they cannot be got quit of while we are in the body, as so many troublesome companions, they may at least be deposed from the practical ascendancy they want to wield over us, as so many tyrannical lords and oppressors. Like the whole of a wilful and stubborn team that have a perverse tendency to deviation, would they run into disorder on the reins being yielded to them; but, in virtue of the strength and determination of the governor, the reins are not given up; and so, though with much tension and fatigue and watchfulness, are they kept on the proper course. The difference between such a management, and another where all the animals under command go smoothly and vigorously along in the very path of service that you desire, is another mode of exemplifying the difference that there is between the work of a saint on earth, and the work of a saint in heaven. On earth you have to maintain the guiding and governing power of the mind, over not willing but reluctant subjects, who, if permitted to take their own way, would run off to the by-paths of unrighteousness—and whom you are

required by my text, not to yield up as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.

There is a love of gossip in our nature, partly due to its malignity, and partly due to its taste for the ridiculous; and in virtue of which, there may be an urgent tendency, in the midst of an easy circle of companionship, to come forth with some of those more exquisite traits of a neighbour's folly, the recital of which would impart a zest to the conversation. To make use of a very familiar phrase indeed, you have sometimes a minor calumny of this sort on your tongue's end; and certain it is of such an inclination, that it will not only survive the passage of the soul from a state of nature to a state of grace—but it is an inclination, we know, often given way to, in many a brotherhood and many a sisterhood of common-place professorship. Well then, suppose that on the eve of its escape, a sudden remembrance of the verse which interdicts, not certain of the more flagrant and aggravated, but which interdicts *all* evil speakings together, should come into the mind; and the will, that power which sits in the chair of authority, should of consequence interpose, and lay its arrest on the offending member, and bind it over to a peace which it feels strongly nevertheless tempted to violate—it is quite compatible with the man's Christianity, that he should have about him still, a part of a constitution to which the utterance of a thoughtless story were a pleasurable indulgence—it is quite compatible with his Christianity, that this is a temptation, and he should feel it to be so, but it is not worthy of his vocation, while sensible of its

force, that he should actually and indeed submit to the force: And his part is resolutely to put forth his hand on the reins of management, and not yield his member as an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin.

'But yield yourselves unto God.' Amid the clamour and besetting importunity of the various affections of our nature, there is the will, whose consent must be obtained and whose authority must be given, ere any one of the affections shall be gratified. It is true that the will may be the slave of unworthy passions—just as a monarch may be the slave of unworthy favourites. But still it is from the monarch, that the order is issued. And he must set his seal to it ere it can be carried into effect. It may be a base compliance in him, to grant what he does to the urgency of his profligate and parasitical minions. But still his grant is indispensable; and the same of the will among all the other feelings and faculties of the human constitution. It may be in actual abject subordination to the appetites; and through it the whole man may be lorded over, by a set of most ignoble though most oppressive taskmasters. Yet the moment that the will shall determine to cast off this ascendancy, like as when a monarch dismisses his favourites, their power is at an end; and should the will resolve for God, this were tantamount to our yielding up of the whole man to the will and authority of God. It may do so by one act; and yet that act be the transition of the whole man into another habit, and the passing of the soul under another regimen, than before. Though one step only, it is indeed a big

and a decisive one. It is the great introductory movement to a new life—nor can we figure a mightier crisis, or a more pregnant turning point in your personal history, than is that resolve of the mind, by which it resolves effectually for God, by which it yields itself up unto Him with full purpose of heart and endeavour after new obedience.

And this one act, brooding as it does with consequences of such moment, both in time and in eternity—we are called upon in the clause now under consideration to perform. The man who enlists himself into soldiery, may do it in a single instant; and that fixes him down for life to the obedience of a new master. What I want to gain is your resolution of entrance into the perpetual service of God—that you purpose now to give no more of your time to the lusts of the flesh, but to His will—that the posture now of readiness for His commands, and determination to obey them, be at this moment assumed by you—that you now give the consent of your will, that great master faculty of the inner man, to your being henceforth the subjects of God's authority whatever may be its requirements—that listening, as it long has, to sin and to sense and to selfishness, you make it now your deliberate and steadfast aim to resist all the suggestions of these troublesome and treacherous advisers; and in their place you throne the great principle of, 'Lord, what willest thou me to do?'—All these are just so many other ways of expressing that greatest of all practical movements, by which a man yields himself up unto God—a movement, which, if not taken, leaves you still in the broad way among the

children of disobedience, and either marks you to be still an utter stranger to the doctrine of Christ; or, if you be acquainted with that doctrine, marks and most decisively, that it is a doctrine which has come to you in word only and not in power.

Be assured, my brethren, that, in proportion to the strength and the simplicity of your determination for God, will be the clearness of your Christianity, and the comfort attendant on all its hopes and all its promises. It is the man whose eye is single, whose whole body shall be full of light. You complain of darkness, do you? See that there be not a want of perfect oneness and willingness and sincerity, as to the total yielding of yourself unto God. The entanglement of one wrong and worldly affection, may mar your purposes. The influence of one forbidden conformity, may do it. To the right following of Christ, there must be the forsaking of all. He must be chosen as the alone master; nor will He accept of a partial yielding up of yourselves. It must be an entire and unexcepted yielding. Nor is there any thing so likely as the doublings of a wavering and undecided purpose, to wrap the gospel in obscurity, and throw a darkening shroud over all that truth which ministers peace and joy to the believer's soul.

And I trust that you are now prepared to meet a difficulty, which is sometimes suggested, when the Christian disciple is urged on to perfection. You are now aware of the utter hopelessness that there is in the attempt to extirpate the presence of sin; but this, so far from discouraging, ought the rather to excite you to the uttermost strenuousness

in the work of making head against its power. In such a state of matters, there may at least be a pure and perfect and honest-hearted aim—though there will not be so perfect an accomplishment, as if all the sinful appetites were eradicated, instead of all these appetites being only kept in order. The purpose of the mind may be sound—the full set of the inner man which delights in the law of God, may be towards obedience to that law—And thus there may be a perfect surrendering yourselves up unto the service of God, though not so perfect an execution of the service itself as if you had no vile body of sin and of death to contend against. The charioteer whose horses have a strong sideway direction, may be as thoroughly intent on the object of keeping his vehicle on the road—as he whose horses would of themselves and without even the guidance of the reins, keep an unfaltering direction in the right path. And he may also succeed in keeping them on, though they neither move so easily, or smoothly, or quickly. The perfection of aim is the same in both—though the one must put forth a more painful and not so successful an endeavour as the other. And it is just in this way, that I call on you, with the full set of all your purposes and energies, steadfastly to keep and carefully to describe the career of a new obedience. God, who knoweth your constitution, knoweth how to distinguish between a failing in the purpose and a failing in the performance. He calls for singleness and perfectness and godly sincerity in the one. He si aware of your frame, and is touched with the feeling of your infirmities, and knows when He con-

sistently with the rules of His unerring government may pass by the shortcomings of the other. And thus while encouraged to confess and pray over the remembrance of certain sins in the hope that they may be forgiven—we are also taught, that there is a sin which will not be forgiven, there is a sin unto death.

See that in yielding yourselves unto God, it be a perfect surrender that you make. See that you give yourself wholly over to His service. I am not asking at present how much you can do; but go to the service with the feeling that your all is due, and with the honest intention and desire that all shall be done. Let there be no vitiating compromise between sin and duty in the principle of your actions—whatever the degree of soil or of shortness in the actions themselves. Enter upon your new allegiance to God, with a full desire to acquit yourselves of all its obligations; and thus it is, that, without reservation, you may take Him to be your liege Sovereign—and that, without reservation, you may yield yourselves up unto God.

Then follows a very important clause—'as those who are alive from the dead.' It cuts up legalism by the roots. To work legally is to work for life—to work evangelically is to work from life. When you set forth on the work of obedience in the one way, you do it to attain a life that you have not. When you set forth on the work of obedience in the other way, you do it in the exercise and from the energies of a life that you already have. Which is the way of the text is perfectly obvious. You

are not here called upon to enter the service of God, as those who have life to win; but to enter the service of God, as those who are already alive—as those who can count upon heaven as their own, and with a sense of God's loving favour in their hearts and a prospect of glory eternal in their eye, put themselves under the authority of that gracious Parent, who guides and cheers and smiles upon them along the path of preparation.

In this single expression, there are three distinct things suggested to our attention; and all of them standing connected with that new gospel service upon which we enter, at the moment of our release from the sentence and the state of death.

There is first the hopefulness of such a service. The same work, that, out of Christ, would have been vain for all the purposes of acceptance—is no longer vain in the Lord. The same labour that would have been fruitless, when, toiling in our yet unredeemed state of condemnation, we would have toiled as if in the very fire and found nothing—may now be fruitful of such spiritual sacrifices, as are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The same offerings, which would have been rejected as an equivalent for the wages of a servant, may now be rejoiced over and minister complacency to the spirit of our heavenly Father—when rendered as the attentions of one, whom He has admitted into the number of His recalled and reconciled children. Yield yourselves up unto God then, not as one who has to earn life, but as one who has already gotten life from His hands; and your obedience, divested of all legal jealousies and fears,

will be free and spontaneous on the part of the creature—and, on the part of the Creator, will be sustained as worthy of Himself to receive, for the sake of that great High Priest, whose merits and whose intercession and whose death have poured a consecration over the services of all who believe on Him.

There is secondly in this expression the principle of such a service—even gratitude to Him who has received us. It puts us in mind of these precious scriptures—"We are not our own, we are bought with a price; let us therefore glorify the Lord with our body and our spirit, which are the Lord's." And "if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and he died, that they who live might live no longer to themselves, but to him who died for them, and who rose again." It is just yielding up to Him in service, that which He has conferred upon us by donation. It is turning to its bidden use the instrument He has put into our hands. It is giving Him His own; and you, in yielding yourselves up unto God as those who are alive from the dead, are just yielding the appropriate return of gratitude for the life that has thus been bestowed upon you.

And lastly, in this expression there is implied the power for the service. The faith which receives Christ, receives power along with Him to become one of God's children. It of itself argues a spiritual perception, of which nought but spiritual life can make us capable. The instant of our believing is the instant of our new birth. The same faith which reconciles, is also the faith which

regenerates; and you, in yielding yourselves up unto the service of God, will be nobly upheld among all its fatigues and all its difficulties, by the influences which descend on the prayer of faith from the upper sanctuary.

'And your members as the instruments of righteousness unto God.' You see how readily and how naturally, the apostle descends from the high principle to the plain work of obedience. To yield yourselves unto God, is a brief expression of that act, by which you submit your person and bind over all your performances to His will. To yield your members as the instruments of righteousness unto God, is, in the language of lawyers, like an extension of the brief. It is implementing the great and initiatory deed of your dedication to His service. It is going forth on the business to which you have come engaged; and actually doing in the detail, what you before solemnly and honestly purposed to do in the general. Did you at one time put forth your hand to depredation or violence—now let it be the instrument of service to your neighbour, and honest labour for your families. Or did your feet carry you to the haunts of profligacy—now let them carry you to the house of prayer, and of holy companionship. Or did your tongue utter forth the evil speakings, whether of calumny or carelessness or profanation—let it now be the organ of charity and peace, and let the salt of grace season its various communications. Or did your eyes go abroad in quest of foolishness—let the steadfast covenant now be made with them;

that, with shrinking and sensitive purity, they may be turned away from every obtruding evil. Or did you give your ears to the corrupting jest, and what perhaps is most corrupting of all, to the refined converse that is impregnated with taste and intellect and literature and every charm but that of Christianity—let them now be given up in obedience to the lessons of eternal wisdom, and to the accents which fall from those who fear the Lord and talk often together of His name. In this way you turn your members into so many instruments of righteousness. You give up your bodies as well as your spirits a living sacrifice unto God. The holiness that has been germinated in the heart, is sent forth to the visible walk, and inscribed in characters upon the history that may be read and seen of all men. By yielding yourselves unto God you enlist in His service. By yielding your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, you go about the service. You carry out into deed and into development, what before existed only in design. By yielding yourselves you subscribe the indenture. By yielding your members you act upon this indenture. By the one you undertake in all things for the glory of God. By the other you do all things to His glory. The one shows me that the will, that sovereign among the faculties, is for obedience. The other demonstrates that the will has made good her sovereignty, by showing me the person on the way of obedience.

Be assured that you have not yielded up yourselves, if you have not yielded up your members; or that the heart is not right, if the history is not

right. And, on the other hand, be assured that the honesty, and the frugality, and the temperance, and the scrupulous abstinence from all evil communications, and all the other every-day duties of every-day life, have a high place in religion; that when done unto God, they reflect an influence on the source from which they emanate—adding to the light and spirituality of the believer; and, though only the doings of his outer, yet serving to build up his inner man in faith and in holiness.

Ver. 14. Compare the promise that sin shall not reign over you, with the precept of two verses ago—"let not sin reign over you;" and it will throw light on a very interesting connection, even on the way in which the precepts of the gospel and the promises of the gospel stand related the one with the other. The promise does not supersede the precept. "I will give you a new heart and a new spirit," He says in one place—"Make you a new heart and a new spirit," He says in another. "God worketh in you both to will and to do," in one place—"work out your own salvation," in another. It is precisely in the same way, that He bids the man of withered hand stretch it forth. The man could not unless power had been given; but he made the attempt, and he found the power. The attempt, or an act of obedience on the part of the man, was indispensable. The power, or an act of bestowment on the part of God, was also indispensable. They both met; and the performance of the bidden movement was the result of it. Had the man made the attempt without the power, there would

have been no stretching forth; or had the man got the power and not made the attempt, there would have been as little of stretching forth. It was the concurrence of the one with the other at the instant, that gave rise to the doing of the thing which was required of him. And so of all gospel obedience. "Let not sin reign," "for sin shall not reign"—is in perfect accordancy with "work out your own salvation," for it is "God that worketh in you." It is God's part to lodge the gift, but it is your part to stir it up. Stir up the gift that is in you, says Paul. If no gift be there, nothing will follow. If the gift be there—your exertion turns it to its right use, and works out the right and proper effect of it. It is thus that divine grace and human activity are in perfect co-operation—The one as sovereign as if man had nothing to do—The other as indispensable as if it had been left to man to do all. The grace so far from superseding the activity, gives it all its encouragement—for without the grace the activity were powerless, and you would soon cease from it in all the heartlessness of despair; and thus it is that the precept of "Let not sin reign over you," finds a stimulus instead of a soporific in the promise that "sin shall not reign over you."

And the reason alleged for sin not reigning over you, is, that you are not under the law but under grace. The law is the creditor of all who are under it, and sin is the debt which presses you down with a force which you cannot cast off; and you may conceive the debt to be of magnitude so overwhelming, that you not only are unable for the

slightest liquidation of its principal, but that, unable for its constantly accumulating interest, you cannot live without every day adding to the burden of it. And thus it is with sin—a most fearful reckoning of past guilt against you,—and an hourly augmenting guilt, by which the law is arming every day with a greater strength of rightful severity, that it may wreak on the culprits who have offended it. It has you in its power, even as the creditor has his victims, who can only be rescued from his grasp by the interposition of an able and an adequate surety. And for us sinners, there has been precisely such an interposition. The law has been treated with, by one who has rendered it ample satisfaction—in that He both magnified it and made it honourable. He has rescued us from the challenge, that, because of sin the law would have preferred against us; and sin ceases to have the dominion, in regard to the power of laying on the penalty being now done away. But this is not all. The grace of the gospel, under which you now are, has done more than sweep away the condemnation of sin. It has struck an effectnal blow at its practical ascendancy over you. It has provided a spirit that puts into you another taste, and other inclinations than those you had formerly. The law had power over your person, but not over your will—so that it combined the tormentor with the tyrant, in that it was ever thwarting your desires, whose rebelliousness on the other hand was ever aggravating your guilt. But grace has delivered your person from the law; and, most delightful of all masteries, it has softened

and subbued your wills—and so, causing you to love the way of holiness, has turned your duty into an enjoyment. It has done more than the surety who only liquidates the debt, but perhaps leaves you as thriftless and idle and improvident as before, for new debts and new difficulties. But it has acted like the surety, who not only pays all for you, but supplies you with the means of future independence; and teaches you the management for turning them to the best account; and watches over your proceedings with the assiduity and advices of a friend, whose presence ever delights instead of offending you; and charms you by his own example into the sobriety and industry and good conduct, which form the best guarantees for your prosperity in this world. Thus, we say, does the grace of the gospel not only disenthrall the soul of man from the bondage of guilt; but, enriching it with other desires and other faculties than before, causes it to prosper and to be in health—and to abound in those fruits of the Spirit against which there is no law.

Let me just urge then in conclusion, that you proceed on the inseparable alliance which the gospel has established, between your deliverance from the penalty of sin and your deliverance from its power—that you evidence the interest you have in the first of these privileges, by a life graced and exalted by the second of them—that you now break forth as emancipated creatures whose bonds have been loosed, and from whom the fetters of corruption have been struck off along with the fetters of condemnation. You may say, that it is preach-

ing to the dead, to bid you move and bestir yourselves towards the path of holiness—but not if faith accompany the utterance, for in that case power and life will go along with it. Like the withered hand you will perform the gesture that is required of you at the hearing of our voice—if the Spirit of all grace lend His efficacy to the word that is spoken; and actuate you with that belief in the gospel record, which strengthens as well as saves, and which sanctifies us well as justifies.

LECTURE XXXV.

ROMANS, vi, 15—18.

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

You will perceive that in the 15th verse, the apostle reiterates the objection that was made at the outset of the chapter, where it is said—"What! shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"—the same objection, but grounded on a distinct consideration, or on a consideration differently expressed at least in the 15th verse, where it is said, 'What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?' It strikes me that the apostle, when treating this question as put at the first, has in his eye the grace that pardons; and, in his reply, he urges the inconsistency of creatures, who for sin had been adjudged to die, but through the death of another had been recalled to life again, ever recurring in the habit of their practice to that which brought upon them so sore a condemnation. By the time he arrives at that point in the progress of his argument where we now are, he had asked them to resist the power of sin, and to give themselves up unto the service of

God; and was encouraging them with the prospect of success in this new plan of life, on the assurance that this power of sin was not unconquerable, but that, instead of its prevailing over them, they should be enabled to prevail over it—because, instead of being now under the law, they were now under grace. And we have no doubt that there was here a reference, not to grace as it pardons, but to grace as it purifies. There is another passage in his writings, where he tells us what that circumstance is which denotes a man to be not under the law. "But if ye be led by the Spirit ye are not under the law." To be taken under the leading of the Spirit is to be taken under grace—even that grace which paid the debt of our souls and is now upholding them in spiritual subsistence. What is the consequence of the Spirit's leading, or what is the fruit of it?—why that we are led to the preference and the practice of all those virtues which enter into the composition of true moral excellence, of which the apostle gives us the enumeration by such specific terms as love and peace and joy and gentleness and goodness and long-suffering and faith and meekness and temperance, against which, says he, there is no law. The grace which delivered us from the reckoning of the law because of our past delinquencies, delivers us also from the future reckonings of the law, by introducing us to such a character and such a conduct as even the law has nothing to allege against; and so the circumstance of being under grace, so far from leading us to sin, leads us just in the opposite direction—leads us to

that domain of righteousness which is not under the law, and that because there the law finds no occasion on which it might put forth its authority to condemn; and there its authority to issue orders is not called for, because it is in fact anticipated by the heaven-born affection which does not wait for its commands, by the heaven-born taste which delights in the doing of them.

Ver. 16. There may appear a sort of unmeaning and uncalled-for tautology in this verse—a something not very close or consequential, and which it is difficult to seize upon. The apostle had already asked them not to yield themselves unto the obedience of sin, but to yield themselves unto the obedience of God. If it were a real and effectual yielding of themselves to the obedience of God, an actual course of obedience to God would emerge from it. If it were but the semblance of thus yielding, or the putting forth of a warm but unsteadfast purpose which was not adhered to and not followed up—then would they still continue in the obedience of sin. Now, says the apostle, you are the servants of him whom you indeed obey—not the servants of him whom you only profess to obey. You may have engaged yourselves to one master—you may have gone through the form of yielding yourselves up unto him—you may perhaps have deluded yourselves into the imagination, that you have made good your surrender unto his will and unto his authority; but still, if, in the fact and in the real history, you obey another—you prove by this that you are indeed the servants of

that other. He who sins is the servant of sin; and the effect of that service is death. He who obeys is the servant of obedience; and the effect of that service is personal righteousness, or personal meetness for the realms of life everlasting. You may have made a dedication of yourselves unto one of these masters; but you are the servants of the other master, if him you actually serve. And perhaps the best way of seizing on the sense of the apostle in this verse, is just to substitute whomsoever for whom in the first clause of it, when the whole would run thus: 'Know ye not that to whomsoever ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye do actually obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?' I have already told you of your release from condemnation by the death of Christ; and I have told you how monstrously out of all proper character it were, that, after readmittance into the bosom of that accepted family from which sin and sin alone had exiled you, you should again recur to the service of sin; and, under the impression of this sentiment, I have bidden you yield yourselves up unto the service of God. And, to encourage you the more, I have proclaimed in your hearing the helps and the facilities which grace hath provided, for speeding you onward in the accomplishment of this service; and when, after all this, you ask me shall I sin then because of this grace—I answer, No. If you do so, it will prove that the yielding not unto sin but unto God, to which I have just enjoined you, has in fact been no yielding at all—that you have made perhaps a

form of dedication; but it is by your after doings, and by these alone, that we are to estimate the truth and the power of it. The grace which you allege, as the plea of exemption from God's service, is the very argument on which I found my expectation, that the path of His service is the very place on which I shall now be sure to meet you—for it is this grace which gives the power. There would be no wanting of it to substantiate your dedication, if the dedication itself were a heartily sound and sincere one. For a man to say, shall I sin because I am under grace?—is in every way as preposterous, as it were for a sick servant that had long been disabled from work but was now recovered, to say, shall I spend my time in idleness or mischief, now that I have gotten health for the labours of my employment? Such a use of his newly-gotten health, would prove that he had not honestly engaged for the interests of that master, whose servant he professes himself to be; and just so of the application to which it is proposed that grace, that mighty restorer of health to the soul, shall be turned—if you are not actually in the service of God but of sin, it proves that you have not honestly yielded yourselves unto God.

Ver. 17, 18. Thus the question, Whose servants are ye, resolves itself into a matter of fact; and is decided, not by the circumstance of your having made a dedication of yourselves unto God, but by the way in which this is followed up by the doings of obedience. Whosoever he may be to whom you profess that you are servants, you are the real

servants of him whom you obey; and the apostle, on looking to his disciples, pronounces them by this test to have become the servants of righteousness. He knows what they were in time past, and he compares it with what they are now. They were the servants of sin—they are now the servants of righteousness. They not only made a show of yielding themselves up in obedience unto this new master; but they make him to be indeed their master, by their in deed and in truth obeying him. And he not only affirms this change of service on the part of his disciples; but he assigns the cause of it. They obeyed from the heart. There might have been an apparent surrender, but which the inner man did not go along with. There might have been the form of a yielding; but some secret reservations, some tacit compromise of which perhaps the man was scarcely if at all conscious, some latent duplicity, that marred the deed, and brought a flaw unto it by which it was invalidated. There may have been something like a prostration of the soul, to the new principle that now claims an ascendancy over it; but there must have been a failing or drawback somewhere. All had not been sound at the core—some want of perfect cordiality about it, that explains why there should have been the semblance of a yielding unto one master, but the actual service of another. Now God be thanked, says the apostle, this is not the way with you. I look at your fruit, and I find it the fruit of holiness. I look at your life, and I find it to be the life of the servants of God. I compare you now with what I know you to have been formerly;

and I find such a practical change as convinces me, that, whereas sin was formerly your master, righteousness is now your master in deed and in truth. And the account he gives of this is, that the yielding which they made of themselves was a sincere and honest yielding. The great master act of obedience, which they rendered at that time, was obedience from the heart; and thus it turned out, that what was truly and singly transacted there, sent forth an impulse of power upon their habits and their history.

But what is it that they are said here to obey from the heart? It is called in our translation the form of doctrine. Now we know that the term doctrine in the original may signify the thing taught, or it may signify the process of teaching. In the last sense it is synonymous with instruction; and instruction, or a process of it, may embrace many items, and may consist of several distinct parts, and be variegated with lessons of diverse sort—to obey which from the heart, is just to take them all in with the simplicity and good faith, in which a child reads, and believingly reads, the exercises of its task-book. And this view of the matter is very much confirmed, by the import of the Greek word corresponding to *form* in our English translation. It is the same with a mould, that impresses its own precise shape however formed, and conveys its own precise devices however multiplied, to the soft and yielding substance whereunto it is applied. And it is further remarkable, that it would be still more accordant with the original—if, instead of its being said that they

obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which had been delivered to them, it had been rendered, that they obeyed from the heart the mould or model of doctrine, into which they had been delivered. The image seems taken from the practice of casting liquified metal into a mould; and whereby the cast and the mould are made the accurate counterparts of each other. Christian truth, in its various parts and various prominences, is likened unto a mould —into which the heart or soul of man is cast, that it may come out a precise transcript of that which has been applied to it. Did the melted lead only touch the mould at one point, it would not receive the shape that was designed to be impressed upon it—or if the surface of the one adhered to the surface of the other only throughout a certain extent, and not at all the parts, neither yet would there be an accurate similitude between the copy and the model. It is by the closeness and the contact of the two all over, and by the yielding of the one softened throughout for the whole impression of the other, that the one takes on the very shape and the very lineaments which it is the purpose of the other to convey.

And such ought to be the impression, which the heart of man receives from the word of God. It should be obedient to every touch, and yield itself to every character that is graven thereupon. It should feel the impression, not from one of its truths only, but from all of them—else, like the cast which is in contact with the mould but at a single point, it will shake and fluctuate, and be altogether wanting in settled conformity to that

with the likeness of which it ought to be everywhere encompassed. You know how difficult it is to poise one body upon another when it has only got one narrow place to stand upon; and that even another will not afford a sufficient basis on which to rest; and that, to secure a position of stability, there must at least be three points of support provided—else the danger is that it may topple to an overthrow. We think that we have seen something akin to this, ere the mind of an enquirer was rightly grounded and settled on the basis of God's revealed testimony—how it veers and fluctuates, when holding only by one article and regardless of all the others—how tossed about it is apt to be by every wind, when it fails of a sufficiently extended grasp on the truths of Christianity—how those who talk for example of the bare act of faith, vacillate and give way in the hour of temptation, and that just because they have not stuck to the testimony of the Bible about the whole duty and discipline of holiness—how those who admit both the righteousness of Christ as their plea, and the regeneration of their own characters as their preparation for heaven, to be alike indispensable, have nevertheless been brought to shipwreck; and that just because, though adhering in words to these two generalities, they have never spread them abroad over their whole history in the living applications of prayer and watchfulness. They need the filling up of their lives and hearts with the whole transcript of revelation. One doctrine does not suffice for this—for God in His wisdom, has thought fit that there shall be a form or scheme of

doctrine. The obedience of the heart unto the faith, is obedience unto all that God proposes, for the belief and acceptance of those who have entered on the scholarship of eternity; and for this purpose, there must be, not a mere subscription or assent of the understanding to any given number of points and articles—there must be a broad coalescence of the mind, with the whole expanse and magnitude of the book of God's testimony.

A scheme of doctrine, you will observe, implies more truths than one; and St. Paul had actually gone beyond the announcement of his one individual item by the time that he reached the verse which is now submitted to you. He was very full on Christ as the propitiation for sin, and on the righteousness of Christ as the plea of acceptance and reward for sinners—and then when he came to the question, shall they who are partakers of this benefit continue in sin that they may get still more of the benefit, he is very strenuous in pronouncing a negative thereupon. Here there was not one doctrine, but a form of doctrine, not one truth but a compound of truths—a mould graven on both sides of it with certain various characters; and the softened metal that is poured therein, yields to it all round, and takes the varied impression from it. And so of him, who obeys from the heart the form of doctrine into which he is delivered. He does not yield to one article, and present a side of hardness and of resistance to another article. He is thoroughly softened and humbled under a sense of sinfulness, and most willingly takes the salvation of the gospel on the terms of the gospel. He does not like

the sturdy controversialist, or the eager champion of system and of argument, call out from the word his own favourite position, with the light of which he would overbear and eclipse the whole remaining expanse of the law and of the testimony; but, like the little child, he follows on to know the Lord—just as the revealed things offer themselves to his docility and notice, on that inscribed tablet which the Lord hath placed before him. This was the way in which the disciples of Paul seemed to have learned their lessons at his hand; and this way of it, it would appear, brings forth the testimony from their apostle, that they had obeyed from the heart the form of his doctrine. Their obeying of it from the heart marks their obeying of it truly and in the inward parts; and their obeying a form of doctrine marks, not their exclusive adherence to one doctrine, but their broad and entire coalescence in his summary of doctrine. A most important step this, for it forms the very nodus of concatenation, between what the apostle says they once were and what he says they now are. They were the servants of sin: They are the servants of righteousness, and why;—what was it that took place at the interesting moment of transition, or rather what was it that gave rise to it? They obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine into which they were moulded or cast; and then was it that they were made free from sin—then was it that, loosed from its power as well as from its condemnation, they gave their emancipated faculties to the service of righteousness.

I therefore know not a more pertinent and more

efficacious advice, that I can give for those who are desirous of being made free from sin, and so of being translated into the service of another master beside him who heretofore has domineered over them, than that they should spread open their whole mind to the whole testimony—than that they should render that obedience of their hearts unto the faith, which consists, not in the confinement either of their attention or belief to one of its articles, but in the freeness of their walking survey over the whole platform of revelation, and in their ready appropriation of all the truths which lie extended thereupon. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved," is a quotation from Scripture; and indeed one of the most precious and memorable of its sayings—but "repent and believe the Gospel," is the complex announcement of Jesus Christ Himself; and you must treasure up the saying that "unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, is a weighty and well-laid doctrine—but another is subjoined; and out of the two we have this scheme or form of doctrine, that "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." The belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, will be the salvation of one and all who embrace it; but mark how this one announcement has another added to it, which is hinged to it as it were, and may be made to close into a mould for impressing the heart of God's elect children—"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit

and belief of the truth." To have the blood of Christ sprinkled upon you, is indeed to be furnished with a sure defence against the angel of wrath —when he cometh forth in his avenging mission against the children of iniquity; but within the compass of a single clause, does the apostle Peter tack obedience to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. And then, to use his expressions, do you "obey the truth," and are indeed "obedient children not fashioning yourselves" according to the errors and the ignorance of former days, when you submit to both the articles of this clause, and proceed upon them both. Paul went about preaching everywhere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; but this forms only one part of his summary, according to his own description of it—and so he tells us of his "testifying, both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." In one place he could say of himself and of his disciples, that, "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and in another place he says to his disciples "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And he told them that such they once were, but they had made it seems the very transition spoken of in our text; and he could now say, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." And the way for you, my brethren, to make good the same transition—is to have the same obedience of faith—it is to spread out the tablet of your heart, for the pressure thereupon of all the cha-

racters that are graven on the tablet of revelation —it is to incorporate in your creed the necessity of a holy life, in imitation and at the will of the Lord Jesus, along with a humble reliance on His merits as your alone meritorious plea for acceptance with the Father—it is to give up the narrow, intolerant, and restrictive system of theology, which, by vesting a right of monopoly in a few of its favourite positions, acts like the corresponding system of trade, in impeding the full circulation of its truths and of its treasure, through that world within itself, which is made up of the powers and affections and faculties that reside in a human bosom. But do you, my brethren, obey the whole form of Christian doctrine, as well as each and sundry of its articles—be your faith as broad and as long, as is the record of all those communications, that are addressed to it—and be very sure that it is only when you yield yourselves up in submission to all its truths, that you can be made free from sin by sharing in the fulfilment of all its promises.

You often read in Christian authors of the power of the truth; and by which they mean its power, not merely to pacify the sinner's fears, but its power to sanctify his character. It is a just and expressive phrase, and is adverted to in the passage before us, where it is said that the being made free from sin, and becoming servants unto righteousness, turns on the obedience of the heart to doctrine. But it is not one doctrine only, but the entire form of doctrine, to which the heart is obedient; and so this power of the truth, is the power of the whole truth. Mutilate the truth and you

cripple it. Pare it down and you paralyse its energies. The Spirit is grieved with the duplicity and the disingenuousness of men, when they offer to divide that testimony, which, if they would but treat it fairly, He would turn into the mighty engine of their conversion, and so pass them over with the strength of His own right hand, from the service of sin to the service of righteousness. The obedience must be sincere, or it is not obedience from the heart; and it must not be partial, or it is not obedience to the whole form of doctrine that is delivered. And at the sight of this flaw, the Spirit takes His flight from the heart that is deformed by it; and leaves the owner thereof in the thraldom of nature's corruption and nature's carnality. And thus, my brethren, as you hope to be rescued from the tyranny of sin by the power of Christian truth, you must fan and foster the whole of it. There must be the submission of a whole faith to a whole testimony. Divide and you darken. The whole of that light, which one truth or one portion of the record reflects upon another, is extinguished—when the inquirer, instead of looking fearlessly abroad over the rich and varied landscape of revelation, fastens his intent regards on one narrow portion of the territory, and shuts out the rest from the eye of his contemplation. The Spirit will not lend Himself to such a man—one who does not choose to see afar off; and is sure to forget some capital truth or other, in that finished scheme of doctrine which the gospel has made known to us. And of all the things which he is apt to forget—perhaps the most frequent is, that

every true Christian is purged from his old sins; and thus, in the language of Peter, the person who is thus blind, lacketh righteousness, and is both barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason why you remain in the fetters of sin is, that you refuse your consent to some part or other in the scheme of truth. You would fain have orthodoxy, and perhaps think that you are in the actual possession of it, when, without power and without spiritual discernment, you only strain at a few of the literalities of Christian doctrine, and sit down in the unmoved lethargy of nature, with the word upon your lips that there is salvation by faith, and forgiveness through the blood of a satisfying atonement. Could we only get you to admit the necessity of a personal surrender, in all holy obedience unto God—could we prevail upon you to believe that Christ came, not merely to redeem you from guilt, but to redeem you from the vain conversation of the world—could we, under the power of this incipient conviction, only persuade you to make a beginning, and to move a single footstep in the way of transition from sin unto righteousness—could you understand, that, even as the remission of sins must be had, so repentance must be accomplished, ere you be admitted into heaven, and the honesty of this your understanding approved itself by your forthwith acting upon it—could we only get you thus to set forth on this measure of incipient light, the light would grow with the incipient obedience; and, ever brightening as you advanced, would the principle of for-

saking all for Christ become more decided; and your decision for Christ would grow with the growth, and strengthen with the strength of your dependence upon Him. The justification and the sanctification, these two mighty terms in Christianity, would be alike clearly apprehended as essential to the completion of the scheme of that doctrine, by the obedience of the heart unto which it is that you are saved. And I again repeat it, my brethren, take in the whole of gospel truth—lay hold of its offered pardon, and enter even now upon its prescribed course of purification. The Spirit will not look indifferently on your day of small things; but if you, casting yourself into the mould of the whole truth, shall labour to realise it and seek to be renewed as will as to be forgiven—He will come down with the might of His creative energies upon you, and, breaking asunder the chains of your captivity to sin, will cause you henceforward to be the servants of righteousness.

This practical change, stands connected with the obedience of your heart to the from or scheme of Christian doctrine—for it is upon this being rendered, that you are made free from sin and become the servants of righteousness. Yet let us not think therefore, that we, of our own proper energy, supply as it were the first condition on which our deliverance from sin is made to turn; and that then the Spirit comes down and gives full and finished accomplishment to it. The truth is, that He presides over the initial, as well as over all the successive movements of this great transfor-

mation; and accordingly, in the 17th verse, the primary circumstance of your obeying form the heart the form of doctrine, is made matter of thanksgiving to God. It is through grace, in fact, that you are made to embrace the whole form of doctrine. If any of you feel so disposed in consequence of our imperfect explanations—the glory of this is due to grace, which has revealed to you the necessity of holiness as well as pardon—which has touched and softened your hearts under the impression of this truth—which has moved you to an aspiring obedience thereto—which will lead you, I trust, to carry out the principle into practice and daily conversation —which will vent itself upward to the sanctuary in prayer, and bring down that returning force, which can unchain you from the bondage of corruption, and give you impulse and strength for all the services of righteousness. It is grace that begins the good work, and it is grace that perfects it—and to sin because we are under this grace, carries in it just the same contradiction, as to be in darkness because the sun has arisen; or to be in despair because an able friend has come forward to support us; or to be in disease because an infallible physician has taken us in his charge, and is now plying us with a regimen which never misgives, and with medicines the operation of which never disappointed him.

LECTURE XXXVI.

ROMANS, vi, 19—21.

" I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death."

The first clause of the nineteenth verse reminds us somewhat of another passage in the apostle's writings, when he says to his disciples, I speak unto you not as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. The transition from the rude and raw conceptions of nature, to the heights of spiritual wisdom and discernment, is not an immediate but a successive one; and so it follows, that the illustrations of Christian doctrine, must be varied according to the progress of him whom you are labouring to convince and to satisfy; and we have to speak more in the manner of men, more in the way that is suited to the comprehension of unenlightened and unrenewed humanity, to those who are still in the infancy of their education for heaven —whereas, in the language of Paul, to those who are perfect, to those who by reason of use have had their senses well exercised, we speak what he calls hidden wisdom, even the wisdom of God in a mystery. From the clause before us, we infer that the same topic may be variously illustrated, and that accord-

ing to the degree of maturity which our hearers have attained in Christian experience. And, agreeably to this, we find, that, whereas in the first instance, the apostle, in expounding the personal change from sin to holiness which takes place on every believer, borrows a similitude that may be understood by men at the very outset of their Christian discipleship—he passes on to another consideration, the force of which could only be felt and acquiesced in by those, who had in some degree been familiarised to the fruits and the feelings and the delights of new obedience.

This by the way may account for the various tastes that there are for various styles and manners of elucidation; and all it may be of substantially the same doctrine. It justifies fully the very peculiar appetite, that a hearer is often found to express for that which he feels to be most suited to him. Nay it goes to explain the change that may have taken place in his preference for the ministrations of another expounder, whose mode of putting or illustrating the truths of Christianity, is the best adapted to that state of progress whereunto he has now attained. And all that remains for him is to bear in mind, that there are other hearts and other understandings in the world beside his own—that, as there is a diversity of subjects, so there is and so there ought to be a diversity of applications; and, accordingly, a diversity of gifts is provided by that Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as He will. This consideration should serve to abate a little of the intolerance, wherewith a hearer is apt to regard the ministra-

tions of all, who do not lie within the boundary of his own very limited and exclusive favouritism. It should expand into a wider latitude that estimation of utility and worth, which he is too apt to confine to those select few among the preachers, who work most effectually upon the peculiar tablet of his own understanding. More particularly, when he sees how Paul accommodated his illustrations to the capacities and progress of his disciples —how, on the principle of being all things to all men, he made use of carnal or human comparisons, to those who were but just emerging into spiritual light from the mere light and discernment of nature—how this gifted apostle, that could have dealt out the profounder mysteries to the older and more accomplished converts, condescended to men of low attainment; and for their sakes came forth with explanations, the need or the pertinency of which might not have been felt by those who had reached a higher maturity of experience in the gospel— Then might he patiently wait what to him perhaps are the insipid or inapplicable reasonings of his minister, in the hope that others of the congregation require the very argument which falls powerlessly on his own heart, and are profiting by the very considerations which to him are superfluous or uncalled for.

And it is well to notice that the precise illustration is, which Paul seems, while he was using it, to have felt of so puerile and elementary a character, or so adapted to the mere infancy of the Christian understanding—that he says I speak as a man or as a mere child of nature, who had not been initi-

ated into the mysteries of the gospel, and that because of the infirmity of your flesh. The thing he was attempting to make plain to them, was the transition of a believer from the service of sin to the service of righteousness. The service of sin might not be a very palpable conception to us, it being the service of a mere abstraction, so long as you restrict your attention to the general term. But when embodied, as it was to the imagination of a heathen convert, in the person of a heathen deity; and familiar, as he must have been, with those impure and frantic orgies which were held in honour of a god who both exemplified and patronised the worst vices of our nature—he would instantly connect with the service of sin, the service of a living master, who issued a voice of authority and exacted deeds of iniquity from his worshippers, as the most acceptable homage that could be rendered to him. In turning from that service to the service of righteousness, he could thus easily comprehend it, as a similar transition to that of passing from under the authority of one living commander to another—even from the god or gods to whom he aforetime rendered the offering of acceptable impurity or acceptable cruelty, to the true God of heaven and of earth whom he could only serve acceptably by walking in holiness and righteousness before Him. And these Romans—accustomed as they were to the transference of bond slaves from one master to another, to the way in which they were ransomed from their old servitude and placed under a new subjection to him who had purchased or redeemed them—would the more

easily catch the similitude from the mouth of the apostle—when he told them of the power and effect of the ransom by Christ; and how, in virtue of it, they were rescued from the grasp of their old tyrant, who could no longer wield that vengeance against them for sin which he else had been permitted to exercise—and no longer, if they chose to betake themselves to the grace and privileges of the gospel, could have that ascendancy over them, by which their affections were entangled and they were kept under the oppressive influence of moral evil. From this they were all released and extricated, by the new master who had laid down his life for them as the price of their captivity; and whom, now that He had taken it up again, they were bound to serve in the way of all His commandments.

And this illustration of it was not only well adapted to the understanding of those Pagans, who had turned them from dumb idols to serve the living and the true God. It may still, in many instances, be the most effectual that can be employed, for making clear to the convert of modern days, either at the moment of his turning or recently after he has done so—how he enters on the new habit of a sanctified disciple, at the time that rescued from condemnation he cherishes the new hope of a redeemed disciple. He need be at no loss either for a living and substantial personification, when told of the service of sin. There is a real monarch to whom the iniquities of every sinner are so many acceptable offerings—a superhuman being who sits on a throne, the authority of

which extends over a wide domain of the moral world—an actual and living Moloch, who is surrounded by innumerable slaves whom he has the power of tyrannizing over in time and of tormenting through all eternity: And the express mission of the Son of God was to combat and overthrow him. He came to destroy the works of the devil; and to make good the deliverance of all, who put themselves under Himself as the captain of their salvation, and are willing to be rescued from the grasp of the adversary. And that power to punish us in hell, wherewith Satan was invested, Christ has as it were exhausted by stepping forward and absorbing its whole discharge in His own body on the tree. And that power to fascinate and enthrall us upon earth, wherewith the God of this world holds his votaries in subjection to sin, the Redeemer hath also overcome by the Spirit poured forth on the hearts of His followers, from that throne of mediatorship to which He has been exalted. And the believer, strong and shielded and secure in the privileges that have thus been obtained for him, is effectually set at large from the power of his old master—either to confine him in the prison-house of guilt, or to control him in any of his actions now that he walketh at liberty. But still like the bond servant who has been translated to a humane from a hard-hearted superior, he is not his own—he is bought with a price—and his business is now to devote, to the new and the pleasing service of Him who loveth righteousness and who hateth iniquity, that soul and spirit and body which are not his own but his Lord's.

But the chief cause, perhaps, why an illustration of this sort is more readily seized upon at the outset of our Christianity than many others, is that it falls more in with the natural legality of the human heart. We know not how obstinately it is that the conception of work and wages adheres to us, long after we profess to have given in to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and this leaven of carnality may remain, to taint the pure and the free and evangelical spirit, even for many months after the germ of gospel truth has been deposited, and ere by its growth it overbear the feelings and tendencies of the old man. It is remarkable that Paul should think it right to adjust his expositions, to this state of immature and yet unformed Christianity; and that the sturdy and unbending advocate of salvation by grace, and by grace exclusively, should, for the purpose of helping forward the cause of Christian holiness, avail himself of the legal admixture that still infuses itself into the thoughts at the earlier stages of the Christian discipleship. But so it is; and, on the principle of all things to all men, he suits his argument to the infirmity of their flesh; and, disposed as they are under the economy of nature to regard themselves as servants, who by the fulfilment of an allotted task make out a title to payment from their master —he still, under the economy of the gospel, employs at least the relationship of servant and master to express the relationship that there is between them and God. He comes upon the very borders of legality, in order that he might fetch from thence a something that he might suitably address to the

babes in Christ, for the purpose of urging them on to the new life that becomes the new creature; and while none more careful than he to check in his disciples the spirit that would challenge reward from God, even as the servant might prosecute the master for his rightful wages—yet none more solicitous than he, that every Christian should be steadfast and abundant in all the works of righteousness. And therefore, did he gladly avail himself of a similitude, that the very legalism of the heart would dispose it the more readily to apprehend; and by which he would make it plain to his disciples, that they must now give themselves up to the service of another master—that they must now yield themselves unto God.

It may only be further necessary in this verse to explain its reiterations. In their former state they had made their members servants to iniquity unto iniquity—that is, iniquity, or he in whom moral evil may be conceived as personified or embodied, was their master. They were servants to, or the servants of iniquity; and it is added 'unto iniquity'.—That is to say, unto the corruption or iniquity of their own character. The effect of making iniquity their master, was to stamp the character of iniquity upon their souls. They were the slaves of the tyrant iniquity; and the effect of this was to make themselves iniquitous. And in like manner, are we to explain the counterpart clause of their yielding their members servants to righteousness unto holiness—that is, by entering into the service of this new master, they become partakers of his character and of his taste in their own per-

sons. They could not become the servants of righteousness, without themselves becoming holy. In yielding up their members unto righteousness, they look to righteousness as vested with an authority to rule over their actions; and the effect of their doing so is, that righteousness becomes an accomplishment to adorn and exalt their nature. So that this last clause may be thus paraphrased—'As aforetime you have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness and to iniquity, unto the utter ruin and corruption of your whole character—even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto the recovery and transformation of your character, that it may stand out anew in all the charms of holiness, and be graced as it was originally with the features and the lineaments of that divine resemblance wherein it was created.'

And I may here advert to the influence which action has upon principle. When you do what is right at the bidding of another, there may, in the first instance, be no very willing concurrence of the heart with the obedience that has been prescribed to you. You may yield yourself up unto God, under an overpowering sense of His authority; and, from that impulse alone, do many things, which the spontaneous tastes and feelings of the inner man do not very cordially go along with. But no matter—you have entered upon His service; and the effect of your strenuous and faithful perseverance in the course of it, will be to reconcile the inner man to that whereunto you have restrained the outer man. This is a result which it

appears you must work your way to. The effect of your going through the services of righteousness, is that you will at length attain the spirit of holiness. You must labour at the work of obedience; and, like unto the effect of practice in many other parts of human experience, you will at length come to love the ways of obedience. We doubt not that a certain degree of desire and of cordial regard towards what is right, enters into the very first moving principle that sets you agoing on the career of your sanctification. But you are not to wait till your taste and affections be spiritualised to a sufficient pitch, ere you embark on this career. But now, whether with or against the grain, do whatever your hand findeth to do which you know to be obviously right. Do it under a sense of allegiance to God, in defect meanwhile of the more generous and angelic principle that you like the doing of it; and the transition pointed out in the text seems to be, that, as the fruit of your being subordinated to God's authority, will you come at length to be assimilated to Him in holiness.

Ver. 20. This twentieth verse seems an argument for our entire dedication to the new master, into whose service we have entered ourselves. It is somewhat like the consideration of making the past time of our life suffice, for having done the will of the flehs; and that it is now high time to spend the remainder of our life in doing the will of God. Aforetime you were wholly given over to the service of sin, and righteousness as emanated from the divine sovereignty had no dominion. You were free from righteousness, or wholly unrestrained by

its obligations and its precepts. Now then be free from sin, resist the mandates of the old tyrant, and give yourself wholly up to the will of the new master—Let your obedience to Him now be as complete, as was your disregard of Him then; and an argument of mighty influence why the old service should be altogether followed, is urged upon them in the following verse, by the appeal which the apostle makes to their own memory, of what it was they gained in the employment of their first master.

Ver. 21. The apostle now proceeds to an argument, that could be better seized upon by those, who had to a certain degree moved onwards in Christianity—who could now speak to the superiority of the new service over the old; and that, not from the higher authority which had prescribed it, but from the more refined character and enjoyment of the service itself—by those whose moral taste had undergone a renovation, and could now look back with loathing upon the profligacies of their former career, while they cherished a love and a heartfelt preference for those beauties of holiness which adorned the new path whereon they had entered. You will see that, to appreciate such a comparison, marked a higher state of spiritual cultivation, than merely, at the bidding of God, to enter upon the task, which at the outset of their gospel profession He as their new master had put into their hand. The musical scholar, who, at the bidding of a parent or a preceptor, practises every day at the required hours upon an instrument, is not so ripe for a festival of harmony, as he, who, under the impulse of an ear all awake to its charms, revels

as in his most kindred element, when spontaneously he sets him down to the performance—not as a task, but as an entertainment. And neither is that spiritual scholar so ripe for heaven, who, because of the infirmity of his flesh, needs to have his distaste for holiness overcome by the argument of God's authority—as he, who, in his love for holiness, now confirmed by the experience he has had of its pleasant and peaceful ways, nauseates with his whole heart the opposite vice and the opposite impurity. It is right to lift the voice of an imperative requirement on the side of new obedience, at the commencement of every man's Christianity —just as it is right to exact from the musical scholar, a regular attendance on lessons which at the outset he may find to be wearisome. But as in the one case what is felt to be a weariness, often merges, with the cultivation of the taste and of the ear, into a willing and much-loved gratification—so, in the other case, what, from the strength of remaining carnality was laboured at as a bondage and called for the direct incitement of God's authoritative command to make head against the sluggishness of nature, yet, as the fruit of perseverance in the walk of holiness, does the will itself at length become holy; and there is a growth of affection for all its exercises and all its ways; and the doing of the allotted task by the outer man, calls forth and confirms a suitable taste of accordancy in the inner man; and, in proportion to the strength of the regard for what is sacred, must be the strength of the recoil from what is sinful and what is sensual. So that while Paul, in illustrating the tran-

sition of a gospel convert from sin unto righteousness, did, at the moment of that transition and because of the infirmity of his flesh, urge in terms as direct as if the legal economy were still in force, the obligation under which he lay, to exchange the service of one master for the service of another—yet, with the disciple who long had practised and long had persevered at the bidden employment, could he use an argument of a higher and nobler and more generous character; and, triumphantly appealing to his own recollection, asked him to compare the vileness and wretchedness of his former days, with the preciousness of that heavenly charm which he now felt to be in all the works and all the ways of new obedience.

The apostle tells us here of the fruit of sin in time, and of its fruit in eternity. For its fruit in time he refers his disciples to their own experience; and, whether we advert to the licentious or the malignant passions of our nature, we shall find that even on this side of the grave it is a fruit of exceeding bitterness. That heart, which is either tossed with the agitations of unhallowed desire, or which is preyed upon by the remorse and shame and guilty terror that are attendant on its gratification—that once serene bosom, from which its wonted peace, because its wonted sense of purity, has departed—that chamber of the thoughts which is no longer calm, because stormed out of all tranquillity and self-command by the power of a wild imagination—The unhappy owner of all this turbulence, who has given up the reins of government, and now maddens in the pursit of his tumultuous

joys along the career of lawless dissipation—let him speak for himself to the fruit of those things, of which he may well be ashamed. O does he not feel, though still at a distance from the materialism of hell, that a hell of restlessness and agony has already taken up its inmost dwelling-place in his own soul; that there the whip of a secret tormentor has begun its inflictions; and, even now, the undying worm is consciously active and never ceases to corrode him! Or, if he be a stranger still to the fiercer tortures of the heart, will he not at least admit, that, as the fruit of guilty indulgence, a hell of darkness if not a hell of agony, has taken possession of it—that, at least, the whole of that beauteous morning light which gladdened his pure and peaceful childhood is utterly extinguished—that all the vernal springs of approved and placid satisfaction are now dried up—and that, in the whole rupture and riot of his noisy companionship, there is nought that can so cheer his desolate spirit as in the happy years of his boyhood—nought that shines so sweetly upon him, as did the lustre of his pious and his early home.

Or, if, from the wretchedness of him who is the victim of his base and sordid propensities, you proceed to examine the wretchedness of him whom deceit is ever instigating against another's rights, or cruelty has steeled against all that is exquisite and all that is prolonged in another's sufferings—you will find that here too, the heart which is the place of wickedness is also the place of woe; and that, whatever the amount of unhappiness may be of which he is the instrument to others, it may not

equal the unhappiness which his own moral perversities have fermented in his own bosom. The man of deep and inscrutable design, who is an utter stranger to the simplicity and godly sincerity of the gospel—the man of thought and mystery and silence, and into the hiding-place of whose inaccessible heart the light of day never enters—the man who ever ruminates and ponders and revolves, and has a secret chamber of plot and artifice in his own bosom which admits of no partnership with a single brother of the species—Such a one, it may be thought, diabolical though he be, will, in the triumphs of his wary and well-laid policy, have his own sources of diabolical satisfaction. But ere he reach his place in eternity, he too in time may have the foretaste of the misery that awaits him. There is already a hell in his own heart, that is replete with the worst sufferings of the hell of condemnation; and if through the deep disguises in which he lies entrenched from the eye of his fellow-men, we could see all the fears and all the forebodings that fluctuate within him, we should say of him, what is true of every son of wickedness, that, like the troubled sea, he cannot rest.

It seems inseparable from the constitution of every sentient creature, and who is at the same time endowed with moral faculties, that he cannot become wrong without at the same time becoming wretched. And what is the death that is the end of these things, but their natural and their full grown consummation? The fruit of sin in time, when arrived at full and finished maturity, is just the fruit of sin through eternity. There may be

fire—there may be a material lake of vengeance—there may be the shootings of physical agony inflicted on the material frames of the damned by material instruments: But we believe that the chief elements of the torture there, will be moral elements—that fierce and unhallowed desire—that contempt and jealousy and hatred unquenchable—that rancour in every heart, and disdain in every countenance—that the glare of fiendish malignity, and the outcry of mutual revilings, and the oaths of daring blasphemy, and the keen agony of conscious and convicted worthlessness—We believe that these will form the ingredients of that living lake, where the spirits of the accursed will be for ever inhaling an atmosphere of spiritual bitterness. And such is the natural course and consummation of iniquity upon earth. It is merely the sinner reaping what he has sown; and suffering the misery that is essentially entailed upon the character; and passing onwards, by a kind of necessary transition, from the growth and indulgence of vice here, to the constitutional result of it in wretchedness both here and hereafter. It makes no violent or desultory step, from sin in time to hell in eternity. The one emerges from the other, as does the fruit from the flower. It is simply that the sinner be filled with his own ways, and that he eat the fruit of his own devices. All that is necessary to constitute a hell, is to congregate the disobedient together, where, in the language of the Psalmist, they are merely given up by God to their own hearts' lusts, and where they walk in their own counsels.

To conclude—there are some we trust here pre-

sent, who feel the force of the comparison between their past and their present habits; and who all open to the charms of the vast superiority which lies in holiness, would, from the impulse of spiritual taste alone, make a most quick and disgustful recoil from all iniquity. But there may be others, who, instead of having accomplished the transition from darkness to light, are only at the turning point—or are yet but meditating the transition, instead of having made it. They have not yet acquired that loathing for sin, and that love of sacredness, which would make them appreciate the contrast, which the apostle makes between the service of the old and the service of the new master. Then let us revert to them with the argument of the apostle, who spoke to his young converts as a man, and because of the infirmity of their flesh. If they are not yet in a condition for being roused to the performance of the latter service by the finer argument of taste, let us attempt to rouse them by the grosser argument of authority. The scholar is compelled to his hours of attendance for a musical task, and thus does he work himself into a musical taste. And know, ye men, who are still only at the place of breaking forth on the career of new obedience, that it is a career which must be entered on—that though it should for the present be against every taste and tendency of the inner man, your business is to constrain the outer man to a conformity with all the requirements of the gospel —that the life of a Christian is not utterly and throughout like a piece of well-tuned harmony, moving in soft and flowing accordance with a well-

poised and smoothly-going mechanism. But there is a conflict, and a strenuousness, and a painful opposition between the delights of nature and the demands of the gospel, and a positive striving to enter in at the strait gate, and a violence in seizing upon the kingdom of heaven which is taken by force.

LECTURE XXXVII.

ROMANS, vi, 22, 23.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE apostle, in contrasting the nature and enjoyment of the two services, passes from that of sin which is indeed a service of bitterness, to that of righteousness which is a service of delight here and of enduring bliss and glory hereafter. It is remarkable that he speaks of holiness as the fruit, and not as the principle of our service to God—as the effect which that service has upon the character, and not as the impelling moral power which led to the service. And this accords with the observations that we made on the various clauses of the 19th verse—where they who had yielded their members servants to iniquity, are represented as having thereby reaped fruit unto iniquity—or in other words, as having, by their own sinful work, aggravated and confirmed the sinfulness of their own characters. And, on the other hand, they who had yielded their members servants to righteousness, are represented as having reaped thereby fruit unto holiness—or, in other words, they, by doing, and that on a direct feeling of obligation or at the bidding of a direct authority, that which was right, they, by giving an obedient hand to the work of righteousness, rectified their own moral

frames; restored to themselves that image of holiness in which they were originally formed; became saints in taste and principle, from being at the first rather only saints of performance. The obedience of the hand reached a sanctifying influence upon their hearts; and a perseverance in holy conduct made them at length to be holy creatures. This is the very process laid down in the verse before us. In virtue of having become servants to God, they had their fruit unto holiness. We have no doubt that there is a germ of holiness, at the very outset of the new life of the new creature in Christ Jesus. But still a coarser principle of it, if I may be allowed the expression, may predominate at the first; and the finer principles of it may grow into establishment afterwards. The good things may be done, somewhat doggedly as it were, at the will of another; but the assiduous doing of the hand may at length carry along with it the delight of the heart, and the same good things be done at our own will. It may become at length a more spontaneous and pleasurable service; and this certainly marks a stage of higher and more saintly advancement in personal Christianity. It evinces a growing assimilation to God—who does what is right, not in force of another's authority; but who does what is right, in force of the free and original propensities of His own nature to all that is excellent. And in like manner does it forward our resemblance to Him—when, on our first becoming subject to His imperative control, we at length like the service which we aforetime laboured in—when that way, to which at His word of command we have betaken

ourselves, becomes a way of pleasantness—when that path, to which we constrained our footsteps because He had prescribed it, is felt by us to be a path of peace. By such a blessed progress of sanctification as this, do we at length cease to be servants and become sons; the Spirit of adoption is shed upon us; and we feel, even here, somewhat of the glorious liberty of God's own children. A thing of labour is transformed into a thing of love. Our duty becomes our inclination. And, by the heart and spirit being enlisted thereinto, what was before of constraint is now of congeniality and most willing accord. The feeling of bondage wears away; and that which might once have been felt as a burden, is now felt as the very beatitude of the soul. It is thus that the process of the text is realised; and when the transition is so made that the work of servitude becomes a work of felicity and freedom—then is it that man becomes like unto God, and holy even as He is holy.

One most important use to be drawn from this argument is, that you are not to suspend the work of literal obedience, till you are prepared by the renewal that has taken effect on the inner man, for rendering unto God a thoroughly spiritual obedience. There are some who are positively afraid of putting forth their hand on the work of the commandments at all, till they are qualified for the service of God on sound and evangelical principles. Now, in every case, it is right to be always doing what is agreeable to the will of God. There may be a mixture at first of the spirit of bondage—there may be a remainder and taint of the leaven

of legalism—there may be so much of nature's corrupt ingredient in it at the outset, that the apostle would say of these babes in Christ who had just set forth on their new career, "I speak unto you not as unto spiritual but as unto carnal." Yet still it is good to give yourselves over, amid all the crude and embryo and infant conceptions of a young disciple, to the direct service of God. Break loose from your iniquities at this moment. Turn you to all that is palpably on the side of God's law. Struggle your way to the performance of what is virtuous, through all those elements of obscurity and disorder which may fluctuate long in the bosom of a convert. Do plainly what God bids, and on the direct impulse too of God's authority; and the fruit of your thus entering upon His service, will be the perfecting at length of your own holiness—such a holiness as shall be without spot and wrinkle—purified from the flaw of legal bondage, or of mercenary selfishness—a holiness that finds its enjoyment in the service itself, and not in any remuneration that is distinct from or subsequent to the service—a holiness that is upheld, not by the future hope of the great reward which is to come after the keeping of the commandments; but a holiness upheld by the present experience, that in the keeping of the commandments there is a great reward.

Yet mark it well, my brethren, that not till you are made free from sin, can you enter even upon the first rudiments of a fruitful and acceptable obedience—not till you are delivered from him, who, like the executioner for a debt, could at any

time seize upon all your gains, and thus render all care and effort and industry on your part of no avail. The analogy holds between him who has the power of pursuing you with diligence, because of what you owe; and him who has the power of inflicting death as the condemnatory sentence upon you, because of what you have incurred as a transgressor of the law. The man who has not gotten his discharge, is bereft of every motive to economy or to labour—because the creditor is on his watch, to lay hold of the entire proceeds; and, by every movement he makes towards him, he can add to the expense of the business, and so plunge him into more hopeless and irretrievable circumstances than before. And so it is of the great adversary of human souls—invested with power as the grim executioner of the sentence; and invested also with the power of aggravating that sentence, by the corrupt sway that he has over the affections of his enslaved votaries, by the command which belongs to him as the god of this world over all the elements of temptation, by his ill-gotten empire in the hearts of the fallen posterity of a fallen ancestor. To be freed from this hateful tyranny, there must be recourse to Christ as your surety—so that this arch-bailiff shall no longer have the right to pursue you, for the heavy arrears of all the negligence and all the misconduct that are past; and there must also be recourse upon Christ as your strength and sanctifier—so that this arch-betrayer, shall be as little able to subjugate you to the power of sin as to exact from you its punishment. So that faith, and justification by faith, and our interest in

that promise of the Spirit which is given to faith —this after all forms the great introductory step to a life of hearty, because to a life of hopeful obedience. A more literal obedience at the first, may be the stepping-stone to a more spiritual obedience afterwards—but faith is the essential stepping-stone to all obedience. Without faith, the sense of a debt, from which you are not yet free, will ever continue to haunt and to paralyse you. Without faith, God remains the object, not of love, but of dread; and thus an immovable interdict is laid upon the service of the affections. Without faith, all the helps and facilities of obedience are withheld from the soul; and the weary unproductive struggle of him who is not yet freed from the law which is the strength of sin, terminates, either in a deceitful formality, or in the abandonment of a task now felt to be impracticable, or finally in the utter wretchedness of despair. Faith opens a gate of conveyance through all these obstructions. It cancels the bond that was before felt as a dead weight on all the energies of an aspiring reformation. It gives the feeling that now obedience is not in vain; and that the labour of serving God, instead of having all its acquisitions wrested away as by the hand of an unrelenting creditor on the moment that they are made, is now productive of a fruit, that is realised in time and that endures through eternity. Like the discharged bankrupt, can the believer who is freed from sin, now count upon the gains of his diligence, and may therefore set himself anew to save and to strive for treasure that he is permitted to enjoy. Faith is the starting-post

of obedience; but what I want is that you start immediately—that you wait not for more light to spiritualise your obedience; but that you work for more light, by yielding a present obedience up to the present light which you possess—that you stir up all the gift which is now in you; and this is the way to have the gift enlarged—that whatever your hand findeth to do in the way of service to God, you now do it with all your might: And the very fruit of doing it because of His authority, is that you will at length do it because of your own renovated taste. As you persevere in the labours of His service, you will grow in the likeness of His character. The graces of holiness will both brighten and multiply upon you. These will be your treasures, and treasures for heaven too,—the delights of which mainly consist in the affections and feelings and congenial employments of the new creature.

We gather from the text, what is the great and practical business of a Christian in the world. It is to perfect his holiness. The promises he lays hold of by faith. The future blessedness and the present sanctification are both held out to him as a gift, at the very moment of his first contact with the overtures of the gospel. There is a free pardon—there is an all-perfect righteousness for his valid claim upon God's favour—there is a renewing and a strengthening spirit—All these are gratuitously stretched forth to him for his acceptance; and his business, and the business of you all, is now, even now, to put on the investiture of these various privileges. And mark how the apostle

lays down the career of activity for a disciple, as a thing subsequent to all this, and emanating out of all this—"*Having therefore these promises*, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting our holiness in the fear of God." And it is of importance to advert here, to the place that the fear of God has in this process of your advancing sanctification —as harmonising with the text, that, by becoming the servants of God ye have your fruit unto holiness. You begin the new obedience of the gospel, more at first in the spirit and with the fearfulness of servants—more under the impulse of God's rightful authority over you—more perhaps at His bidding than at your inclination—more from a sense of duty to Him, than from the love you as yet bear to the work that He has given you to do. But no matter—be diligent with such principles as you have, with such performances as God hath prescribed to you; and your diligence in the service will at length work out a delight in the service. The labour you render to Him as your Master, will forward and mature your family likeness to Him as your Father. From servants you will become sons; and my object in urging this law and order of progression upon you, is, if possible, to set you aworking with such humble degrees of light and spirituality as you have—and this is the way of attaining to more light and to more spirituality. It is to cause you to break forth from the ground of inactive speculation; and to put into your hands the employment of an instant task, to which you may perhaps feel prompted at

the outset by something even of a legal fear towards God. But no matter—should it be the task that goes to perfect your holiness, it will perfect also your love; and then will you be conclusively delivered from the spirit of all legalism or bondage or carnality, and have that affection in your bosom which casteth out fear.

And I should like you to know the precise import of the term holiness. It has been defined to be all moral and spiritual excellence. But this does not just exhaust the meaning of the term. It is not just virtue, even in the most comprehensive sense of the word, as including in it all that one absolutely ought to be, both in reference to God and to all the creatures of God. To turn virtue into holiness, a reference must be had to the opposite of virtue—even sin; and then does virtue become holiness, when, in addition to its own positive qualities, we behold with what sudden and sensitive aversion it recoils from the contamination of its opposite. Thus it is, my brethren, that had there been no sin there would have been no sacredness. There might have been love and rectitude and truth, exalted to all that infinity which they have in the Godhead; and filling too, according to the measure of his capacity, every one being that had sprung from the creative hand of the Divinity. But, in order that the Divinity or any subordinate creature shall make an exhibition of sacredness—it must be seen how it is that he stands affected by the contemplation of sin; or by the approach of sin to his presence. And then it is that we witness the characteristic display of God in the holi-

ness, or of God in the sacredness that belongs to Him—when we read of the eyes which are so pure that they cannot look upon iniquity—when we read of a sanctuary so remote from all fellowship with evil, that it is there impossible for evil to dwell—when we read of God in the awful jealousies, and of God in the unconquerable repugnance of His nature to sin; of the grief and the hostility and the indignation wherewith it is regarded by the Spirit of the Deity—So that should it offer to draw nigh, all Heaven would shrink at its coming; or fire would go forth from the place where His Honour dwelleth, to burn up and to destroy.

Holiness is virtue, regarded in the one aspect of its separation from all that is opposite to virtue. It is thus that the attributes of clean and pure and untainted are given to it—free from all spot, because free from all mixture or vicinity with sinfulness. The vessels of the temple were holy, because, set apart from common use, they were consecrated, and that exclusively, to the solemn and separate services of a divine ritual. But the most striking of all the historical demonstrations that we have, of the deep and determined recoil that there is between a holy God and a sinful world, is, when He gave it in charge to set bounds about mount Sinai and to sanctify it—through which neither the priests nor the people were to pass, lest the Lord should break forth upon them.

From this explanation, you will see how the fruit of holiness arises out of the cleansing of yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit. The deeds of impurity must be given up at God's

bidding, even though the urgency of His command should carry you beyond what you would have been carried to, by your own detestation of impurity. You, at the outset of your new course, make a wider departure from iniquity than your own dislike to iniquity would prompt you to. But then, this reformation of the outer man will tell upon the inner man. As you keep your fearful distance from evil, your dread and your delicacy against it will augment upon you; and it is just by this reflex influence of the habit upon the heart that its holiness is perfected. And this view of holiness, as consisting of virtue or moral excellence in its quality of uncompromising and unappeasable enmity to sin, harmonises with the character that is held out of heaven—as being a place so inviolably sacred that nothing unclean or unrighteous can enter thereinto. O how it ought to chase away from our spirit all the delusions of antinomianism—when told, as we are, what is the atmosphere of that place whither the disciples of Jesus are going; and how it is not possible for sin so much as to breathe in it! What a spur to diligence in the great work of purifying ourselves even as that upper paradise is pure, in which we hope to spend an eternity; and how busy might we be at all the branches of our spiritual education, when we think that we shall be found unmeet for admittance into the great spiritual family, unless we are found without spot and blameless in the day of Jesus Christ! It is thus that in our text, holiness here is the essential stepping-stone, or the indispensable path of conveyance to heaven hereafter.

And as surely as the end of sin is death, so surely the end of holiness is life everlasting.

We have already adverted to the spiritual character of hell; and have affirmed that the wretchedness thereof, was mainly composed of spiritual elements. And, in like manner may we advert to the spiritual character of heaven; and as surely affirm of it, that the happiness which is felt and circulated there, is mainly composed of spiritual elements. It lies in the play and exercise of pleasurable affections—in the possession of a heart now thoroughly emancipated from all its idolatries, and attuned to the love of that which is most worthy of love—in the well-poised and well-constituted mechanism of the soul, that now moves in duteous and delightful conformity to the will of that mighty Being on whom all is suspended—in the conscious enjoyment of His favour, sensibly expressed by such indications of benignity and regard, as will pour into the bosom unutterable extacy—in the raptured contemplation of all the glory and all the gracefulness, that are spread out before the mental eye on the character of the Divinity—in the willing accordancy of honour and blessing and praise, not merely to Him who sitteth supreme on a throne of majesty, but to Him who paved for sinners a way of access into heaven, and consecrated it by His blood. And songs of eternal gratitude and gladness will ever and anon be lifted there; and it will be the spiritual jubilee of beatified spirits that is held there; and the clear ethereal element of holiness will be all that is breathed there; and, altogether, it will not be a sensual, but a moral

paradise—where righteousness will be the alone recreation, and the service of God be the very cordial and nutriment of the soul. And how is it possible, we again ask, that there can be any other way to such a habitation there, than the way here of aspiring and progressive holiness? What other education can fit us for such an eternity as this—but the education of virtuous discipline, and guarded purity, and determined watchfulness against that sin wherewith the sacredness of the upper regions can have no fellowship? If heaven above would recoil from all contact with the pollutions of the world that is below, then surely, we who are aspiring toward that heaven, should keep our assiduous distance from them. The way of the disciple here, should be as distinct and as distinguishable from that of a child of this world, as the places are in which they will spend their eternity; and if it be through the way of sin that the one reaches his abode of death and condemnation, so surely must the other keep on the way of holiness, ere he can reach the abode of life everlasting.

Ver. 23. It is of importance here to remark the contrast which the apostle expresses in this verse, as to the manner of these two successions—how it is, on the one hand, that death follows in the train of sin; and how it is that everlasting life follows in the train of holiness. He had before likened the transition from the one state to the other, to a transition from the service of one master to the service of another master. And he before told us that he had done so, on a principle of accommodation to the yet remaining carnality of their

feelings and conceptions upon the whole subject. They were still infected with the spirit of legalism. They were still most familiar with the illustration of work and wages; and, accustomed as they were to the transition of a bond slave from one master to another, they could readily seize on that comparison—by which Paul urged upon them their emancipation from the authority of sin regarded as their old tyrant, and their allegiance to righteousness regarded as their new and lawful superior. But he now adverts to a difference between the two services, which it is of importance for us all to apprehend. The death that comes after sin comes as the wages of sin. Everlasting life, coming though it must do after holiness, comes not as the wages of holiness. It is a gift. On this footing must it be received at the last; and on this footing must it now be looked forward to by the expectants of immortality.

As to the first of these successions, namely sin and death as the wages of sin,—the very term wages, is expressive of the one, as being the fit remuneration of the other. We are thereby informed of death being rightfully the punishment of sin, or being due to it in the way of desert. I have already endeavoured to show,—that there is nothing in the tyranny of sin over the affections, that can at all exempt us its helpless slaves, from the condemnation to which sinners are liable—that the very strength of our inclinations to that which is evil just makes us the more atrocious, and therefore the more punishable—that had the necessity in question been a necessity against the will to do

wickedly, there might have been cause shown why sentence of death should not be passed against us; but when that necessity just lies in the very bent and determination of the will towards wickedness, then is it a circumstance of aggravation, instead of an apology, for our transgressions against the law of God. Let no man say because of the depravity of his own heart, and the unresisted ascendancy of sin over it, that he is tempted of God. The fact is that he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed; and the death, which is laid upon him as a penalty, is as much the natural as it is the penal effect of his own conduct. In being enveloped with the atmosphere of hell on the other side of the grave, because of his character on this side of it, he is simply filled with the fruit of his own ways—he is just reaping that which he has sown. And as necessarily as anger disquiets, and envy corrodes, and avarice chills, and inordinate desire shakes the spirit into phrensy—as necessarily as the fierce or malignant passions of our nature, like so many tormentors' whips, serve to scourge or to agonise—so necessarily, as well as meritoriously, does their entrance into hell hereafter, follow in the train of all the iniquity that is unrepented of and unturned from.

And as hell is just the place suited naturally for sin, so heaven is just the place that is naturally suited for holiness. But while hell is both naturally and meritoriously the place for sin—heaven is naturally only and not meritoriously the place for holiness. Heaven is not so earned by man. It is given to him. And you should advert to the dis-

tinction so palpably, here held out by the apostle —that whereas death is rendered to the sinner on the footing of wages that are due to him, eternal life is rendered to the believer on the footing of a gift that is simply and freely bestowed upon him.

But mark in the first place—that the circumstance of heaven being a gift, does not supersede the necessity that there is for holiness going before it. It may take away from the merit of holiness; but it does not take away from the need of holiness. The man who comes to the marriage feast must have on the marriage garment; though it is not the simple act of putting on that garment, which entitles him to a seat among the guests. His title there is simply the invitation that he has gotten; and yet it is quite indispensable that he comes suitably arrayed. He may not be able even to purchase the requisite vestments; and should these too have to be provided for him—should even the very dress in which he comes have to be given to him, as well as the entertainment that is set before him after he does come—It may both be true, that without the dress he could not have been admitted; and also, that, poor and defenceless outcast as he was, he owes nothing whatever to himself—that all had to be given; and he, ere he could partake of that feast by which heaven is represented in the New Testament, had to be clothed by another's wealth as well as regaled by another's bounty.

Now this is just the way in which the everlasting life, that none can obtain without being holy, is nevertheless a gift. It is of grace and not at all of works. It is all of grace from the first to the

last—for the very holiness is given; and while of all sin it may be said that it is our own, because drawn away to it of our own lusts and enticed—of holiness it may be said that it is not of ourselves, but that good and perfect gift which cometh down from above.

And as eternal life being a gift, does not supersede the need of holiness—so holiness being a gift, does not supersede the need that there is for your own stirring, and your own painstaking, and all the diligence both of your performances and your prayers. Still the progress is just as has already been set forth to you, from such small doings as you are able for at the first, to your growth in grace and in holiness afterward. And yet, even for the small doings, an influence from on high must have been made to rest upon you. It is by power from heaven that the work is begun; and it is by power from the same quarter that the work is carried forward, even unto perfection. In other words you cannot pray too early. Turn me and I shall be turned, may be a most pertinent and a most availing cry even at the outset of your conversion. You cannot too soon mix up dependence upon more grace, with diligence in the use of all the grace that has already been imparted. When you do whatever your hand findeth to do, you are only stirring up the gift that is in you; and if faithful in turning to account all that you do have, and watchful and prayerful for more, it is thus, that, from the more rude and literal services which you are enabled to render at the outset of your new obedience, you are conducted to the higher attain-

ments of the spiritual character, and have your fruit unto an ever-advancing holiness! And Christ is all in all throughout this entire process. He purchased the inheritance, and He makes you meet for it. He has gone to prepare a place for you there, and He prepares you here for the place. It is through Him that the Spirit is given in answer to your prayers; and while nothing more true than that you must have the fruit of holiness ere you can have eternal life, it is just as true that eternal life, both in its preparations and in its rewards, is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

ROMANS, vii, 1—4.

'Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

The apostle, in these verses, bethinks him of another illustration, on the subject of the new and the holy life that is incumbent on a believer—and one more addressed to his Jewish, even as the former was to his Gentle disciples. In the verses that we have already tried to expound in your hearing, he illustrates the transference that takes place at conversion, from the service of sin to the service of righteousness—by the transference of a bond-slave now made free from his old master, but whose services are still due to the present and the lawful superior under whom he now stands enrolled. The apostle then, at the commencement of this chapter, turns him to those who know the law, and deduces from the obligations which attach to marriage, the same result which he had done before from the obligations which attach to servitude—that is, an abandonment on the part of the believer of those

doings which have their fruit unto death, and a new service which has its fruit unto holiness; or, as it is termed in this passage, its 'fruit unto God.'

The attentive reader will perceive, that there is a certain cast of obscurity over the whole of this passage; and arising from the apparent want of an entire and sustained analogy, between the illustration and the thing to be illustrated. It is true that the obligations of marriage are annulled by the death of either of the parties; but then he only supposes the death of one of the parties, and that is the husband. Now the case to be elucidated by this supposition, is that of the now dissolved relationship which there is between the law and him who was the subject of the law. The law is evidently the husband in this relationship, and the subject is as evidently the wife. So that, to make good the resemblance—the law should be conceived dead, and the subject alive, and at liberty for being transferred into another relationship than that which he formerly occupied. Yet, in reading the first verse, one would suppose—that it was on the expiry of life by the subject, and not on the expiry of life by the law, that the connection between them was to be broken up and dissolved. It is true that the translation might have run thus, 'How that the law hath dominion over a man so long as *it* liveth;' and many, for the sake of preserving a more lucid and consistent analogy, have adopted this translation. But then this does not just suit so well with the fourth verse—where, instead of the law having become dead unto us, we

are represented as having become dead unto the law; so that a certain degree of that sort of confusion, which arises from a mixed or traverse analogy appears unavoidable. It so happens too, that either supposition, of the law being dead or of the subject being dead, stands linked with very important and unquestionable truth—so that by admitting both, you may exhibit this passage as the envelope of two meanings or two lessons, both of which are incontrovertibly sound and practically of very great consequence. This of course, would add very much to the draught that we make upon your attention; and altogether we fear that, unless there is a very pointed and strenuous forthputting of your own intelligence on these verses, we shall fail to render any explanation of them to you, which you will feel to be at all very vivid or very interesting.

It is in the first place true, that the law may be regarded as dead; and that he our former husband, now taken out of the way, has left us free to enter upon that alliance with Christ considered as our new husband, which in many other parts of the New Testament is likened unto a marriage. And it is true also, that the death of the law, which gave rise to the dissolution of its authority over us, took place at the death of Christ. It was then, that, in the language addressed to the Colossians, it was then that our Saviour blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. It was then that the law lost its power to reckon with us, and its right as an

offended lord to take vengeance of our trespasses against Him. You have read of certain venomous animals which expire, on the moment that they have deposited their sting and its mortal poison, in the body of their victim. And thus there ensues a double death—the death of the sufferer, and the death also of the assailant. And certain it is, that on the cross of our Saviour, there was just such a catastrophe. Then did our Saviour pour out His soul, under the weight and agony of those inflictions that were laid upon Him by the law; but then also did the law expend all its power as a judge and an avenger, over those who believe in the Saviour.

There is something in the consideration of the law alive and of the law dead, that should bear practically home upon the fears and the feelings of every enquirer. Without Christ the law is in living force against us; and were we rightly aware both of its claims and of our provocations—then should we feel as if in the hands of an enraged husband, who had us most thoroughly in his power; and who, incensed with jealousy and burning with the spirit of revenge, because of the way in which we had aggrieved and degraded him,—held us in the daily terror of a resentment, which no penitence could appease, and which he was ready to discharge upon us by some awful and overwhelming visitation. It is some such appalling imagination as this, that gives rise to what is familiarly known by a phrase which often occurs in our older authors —a law-work. It is a work which passes through the heart of him, who is conscience-stricken under

the conviction of sin, and terror-stricken under the anticipation of a coming vengeance. The experience and degree of this state of emotion are exceedingly various; but at all times it is the state of one who feels himself still under the law, and liable to be reckoned with by him as an unrelenting creditor—who can allege such an amount of debt as never can be paid, and of deficiency that in his own person can never be atoned for. Some are pursued with this thought, as if by an arrow sticking fast. Others, without such intense agony, are at least haunted by a restlessness, and a discomfort, and a general uneasy sensation that all is not right, which leads them to cast about for the peace and deliverance of some place of refuge, in which they fain would take shelter and hide themselves. All are in the state of the apostle who says of himself, that, when the law came, sin revived and he died—or that, when a sense of the law and of its mighty demands visited his heart, there revived within him a sense of his own fearful deficiences along with it; and he gave himself over to the despair of one, who had rightfully to suffer and rightfully to die. Men under earnestness, and who at the same time have not yet found their way to Christ, are in dealings with the law alive—stand related to him as the wife does to an outraged husband, breathing purposes of vindictiveness and resolute on the accomplishment of them—A state of appalling danger and darkness from which there is no relief, but in the death of that husband; and a state exemplifying perhaps the spiritual condition of some who now hear me, who know themselves to be sinners, and know the

law wherewith they have to do as the unbending and implacable enemy of all who have offended him—who feel that with him there is no reprieve and no reconciliation—who have long perhaps wearied themselves in vain to find some door of escape, from this severe and stern and uncompromising exactor—and, as the bitter result of all their fatiguing but unfruitful endeavours, are now sitting down in heartless and hopeless despondency.

And perhaps the illustration of our text, may open up for them a way of access to the relief which they aspire after. It is just such a relief as would be afforded by the death of the first tyrannical husband, who, at the same time, had a right to wreak the full weight of his displeasure upon you; and by the substitution of another in his place, who had cast the veil of a deep and never-to-be-disturbed oblivion over the whole of your past history, and with whom you were admitted to no other fellowship than that of love and peace and confidence. It is thus, my brethren, that Christ would divorce you, as it were, from your old alliance with the law; and welcome you, instead, to a new and friendly alliance with Himself. He invites you to treat, in trust and in kindly fellowship with Him, as the alone party with whom you need to have to do; and as to the law, with whom you so long have carried on the distressful fellowship of accusation on the one side and of conscious guilt and fear upon the other, He bids you cease from the fellowship altogether—by having no other regard unto the law, than as unto a husband who is now dead and may be forgotten. And to deliver this contemplation from

any image so revolting as that of our rejoicing in the death of a former husband; and finding all the relief of heaven in the more kindred and affectionate society of another—You have to remember, that the law has become dead, so as to be divested of all power of reckoning with you—not by an act which has vilified the law or done it violence, but by an act which has magnified the law and made it honourable—not by a measure which has robbed the law of its due vindication, but by a measure which sets it forth to the world's eye in the full pomp and emblazonment of its vindicated honours—not by the new husband having with assassin blow relieved you of the old, but by the one having done full homage to the rights and authority of the other; and rendered to him such a proud and precious satisfaction, as exalts him more than he could have been by all the fidelities of your most unbroken allegiance. It is thus that Christ has negociated the matter with the law; and now invites you to lay upon Him, the whole burden of its unsettled accounts, and of its fearful reckonings, and of its unappeased resentments—now invites you to break loose from the disquietudes of your old relationship, to emancipate yourselves from that heavy yoke under which you have become weary and heavy laden, to come unto Him and take His yoke upon you; and you shall have rest to your souls.

It is thus that the law which is alive, and fiercely alive to all who are under it, becomes dead to the believer—now no longer under the law but under grace. To him the law is taken out of the way. It is the hand-writing of ordinances that was at one

time against him, and contrary to him; but its hostility has become powerless, ever since it has been nailed to the cross of Christ. It was then, that it put forth all the right and power of condemnation which belonged to it; and therefore it was then, that its authority as a judge may be said to have expired. The law had power over every man, so long as it was alive; and its power went to the infliction of a grievous curse upon all, for all had broken it. But after it got its death-blow on the cross, this power ceased; and we became free from it—just as the woman is free from all the terror and all the tyranny of that deceased husband, who wont to lord it, and perhaps with justice too, most oppressively over her. And thus ought we to hold ourselves as free, from the whole might and menacing of that law, which has now spent its whole force as an executioner, on that body by which the whole chastisement of our peace has been borne. And we actually live beneath our offered privileges—we shut our hearts against that blessed tranquillity, to which by the whole style and tenor of the gospel we are made most abundantly welcome—If we cast not away the terror from our spirits, of an enemy who is now exhausted of all his strength; and resign not ourselves to the full charm of so great and precious a deliverance.

When a sense of the law brings remorse or fearfulness into your heart—transfer your thoughts from it as your now dead, to Christ as your now living husband. Make your escape from all the rueful apprehension which the one would excite, to the rest and the comfort and the able protection

which are held out by the other. Instead of having to do as formerly with the law, have to do with Christ now standing in its place. Thus will you flee to Him, in whom you will find strong consolation. Nor will you throw yourselves loose from the guidance of all rule and of all rectitude, by having thus swept the law entirely away from the field of your vision, and made an entire substitution of Christ in its place—for He is revealed not merely as a witness unto the people, but as a leader and a commander unto the people.

But there is another way than through the death of the husband, by which the relationship of marriage may be dissolved; and that is by the death of the wife. And there is another way in which the relationship between the law and the subject may be dissolved, than by the death of the law; and that is by the death of the subject. The law has no more power over its dead subject, than the husband has over his dead wife, or than the tyrant has over his dead slave. And it is in this way, that the assertion of all power or authority over us, on the part of the law, seems to be represented in the fourth verse—when we are said to have become dead unto the law, and it is added by the body of Christ. This brings us back to the conception that has been already so abundantly insisted on, that in Christ we all died—that we were dead in law; and, though Christ alone and in His own body died for our sins, yet that was tantamount to the legal infliction of the sentence of death upon ourselves—so that the law can have no further reckoning with us, having already had that reck-

oning with us to the full in the person of Him who was our surety and our representative: And just as the criminal law has done its utmost upon him whom it has brought to execution, and can do no more—so the law can do no more in the way of vengeance with us, having already done all with Him who was smitten for our iniquities, and who poured out His soul unto the death for us.

After our old relationship with the law is thus put an end to, the vacancy is supplied, and in a way that is very interesting, by Him, who, after having removed the law through His death out of the station it had before occupied, then rose again and now stands in its place. And we utterly mistake the matter, if we think, that, because emancipated from the relation in which we formerly stood to the law—we are therefore emancipated from all service. The wife owes a duty to her second husband, as well as her first. The one has his claims upon her obedience and her dutiful regards, as well as the other. It is true, that, with the former, the predominant feeling which prompted her services may have been that of obligation—mixed with great fearfulness, because of the deficiencies into which she was perpetually falling; and that, with the latter, the predominant feeling which prompts her services may be sweet and spontaneous affection to one, from whom she is ever sure to obtain the kindest indulgence. But still it is evident, that, under the second economy of matters, there will be service, possibly much greater in amount and certainly far worthier in principle, than all that was ever rendered under the first. And thus

it is with the law on the one hand, and with Christ on the other. Under the law we were bidden to do and live; and the fear of a forfeiture, or the consciousness of having incurred a forfeiture, already infused the spirit of bondage into all our services. Under Christ, we are bidden to live and do. We are put into the secure possession of that which we before had to strive for; and the happy rejoicing creature comes forth at will, with the services of gratitude and of new obedience. Instead of life being given as a return for the work that we render, our work is given as a return for the life that we receive. And it will further be seen, that, whereas a slavish and creeping and jealous selfishness was the principle of all our diligence under the law, it is a free and affectionate generosity which forms the principle of all our diligence under the gospel. In working to the law, it is all for ourselves—even that we may earn a wage or a reward. In working to Christ it is all the free-will offering of love and thankfulness—not in the mercenary spirit of a hireling, but with the buoyant alacrity of an eternally-obliged and devoted friend—because we thus judge, that, as Christ died for all, then were all dead; and He died, that they who live should live no longer to themselves, but unto Him who died for them and who rose again.

And to the eye of the attentive reader, this may throw light on the difficult verse, which comes immediately after the quotation that we have now given.[1] Christ upon earth so lived and so died in our stead, that we may be said to have been held

[1] 2 Corinthians, v, 16.

in the body of Christ. He was made subject to the law, in taking upon Him of our nature; and when He was in the world, we may be conceived with Him to have served the law, and with Him to have suffered under it. But the law hath dominion over a man only so long as he liveth; and thus, at the death of Christ, and our death along with Him, this dominion terminated. And now it is not with the law that we have to do, even as Christ had to do with it in the days of His mortal flesh. It is with Christ in His immortal and glorified body that we hold all our conversation; and thus, perhaps, will the more profoundly spiritual of our hearers feel a meaning in these words of the apostle, who, after he had said of Christians 'that they should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again'—said further, that, 'Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things have become new.'

We shall not have time for the exposition of any more verses at present; and shall therefore take up the remainder of this lecture with the enforcement of such practical lessons, as may be suggested from the passage that we already have endeavoured to illustrate.

It must be quite distinct to you, in the first place, that, though released from the old relationship between you and the law on your be-

coming a disciple of Christ, you are not thereby thrown adrift from all restraint and from all regulation. The second husband has his claims as well as the first; and the wife is as much the subject of obligations to the one as to the other. The transition from nature to grace is here represented, by the dissolving of one marriage and the contracting of another. Had there been no second marriage after the breaking up of the first, then may it have been inferred, that the faith of the gospel led to a state of lawless and reckless abandonment. But there is such a marriage, which of course carries its duties and its obligations and its services along with it; and, accordingly, there is a very remarkable clause in the apostle's writings that is commonly included in a parenthesis—when speaking of himself as without law he says—"Being not without law to God but under the law to Christ." 1 Cor. ix, 21.

Now this leads us in the second place to consider, what it is of the law that we have parted with by the death of the first husband; and what it is of the law that is retained, by our new alliance with the second. And perhaps this cannot be done better, than in the language of our older divines, who tell us, on the one hand, that the law is abolished as a covenant. We have ceased from the economy of 'Do this and live.' Our obedience to the law is no longer the purchase-money by which heaven is bought—no longer the righteousness by which the rewards of eternity are earned—no longer the title-deed on which we can knock at the gate of paradise, and presenting it there,

can demand our admittance among its felicities and its glories. If you choose to abide in the relationship of the first marriage, the law will be unto you a rigorous exactor—insisting on every article of the bond; and looking with an air of jealous and pointed stipulation to your every fulfilment; and, what is more, he will be unto you an offended lord, urging to performances which never can be reached, and reminding of deficiencies which under him never can be pardoned. If you will persist in looking upon heaven as the bargain of your services, then will you be dealt with according to the whole spirit of a bargain's demands and of a bargain's punctualities. Now it is in this respect that the law has ceased from his wonted capacity. The believer is rid of him, and of all his commandments, viewed in the light of so many terms, on the rendering of which eternal life is yours of challenged reward—yours of rightful and meritorious acquirement. All of you I trust are convinced, that on this footing eternal life were placed at an impracticable distance away from you. This was the old footing with the old husband; but, now that he is dead, it is a footing on which, to the great relief of a sinful and sinning species, it no longer stands; and it is thus that we view the matter, when we say of the law that it is abolished as a covenant.

But on the other hand, say our divines—while abolished as a covenant, it is not abolished as a rule of life. Though not under the economy of do and live, still you are under the economy of live and do. Your obedience to the law is no longer

the purchase-money, by which heaven is bought; but still your obedience to the law is the preparation by which you are beautified and arrayed for heaven. It is no longer the righteousness, by which the rewards of eternity are earned; but still it is the righteousness, which fits us to enjoy the sacred rest, and the hallowed recreations of eternity. It is no longer that, by which you obtain such a title as qualifies you to challenge the glories and the felicities of paradise for your due; but still it is that, by which you obtain such a taste, as qualifies for partaking in the glories and the felicities of paradise for your best-loved enjoyment. To walk by rule is to walk on a particular and assigned way. And still, under the gospel as under the law, the way to heaven is the highway of holiness. Still is it as true in the present as in the former dispensation, that, without holiness no man shall see God; and if it be no longer the gold by which you buy the inheritance, still it is the garment that you must put on ere you are permitted to enter on the possession of it.

The proprieties of the marriage state are substantially the same with the second husband, as they were with the first. But while the one would chide you, the other would charm you into the performance of them; and we may add, that, while the stern and authoritative precepts of the one never could have forced your compliance, because the will is not a subject for the treatment of force —the mild persuasions of the other, by his possession of this faculty, carry in them a power that is irresistible. And it is thus that Christ, who loved

the church and gave Himself for it, "sanctifies and cleanses it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Thus it was the will of the first husband, that you should keep the law, and still it is the will of the second also that you should keep the law. There is no distinction, in the matter of it, between the commandment of the one and the commandment of the other. What you ought to have done under the first economy, you still ought to do under the second. It were strange had it been otherwise. He who loveth righteousness, presented man with a draught of it on the tablet of the written law; and told him that, on his obedience thereto, He would reward him with a joyful immortality. This reward has been forfeited by sinners, but redeemed by the Saviour of sinners; and still God, unchangeable as He is in His love of righteousness, and who had before pictured it forth in that perfect code of morality which by man has been violated—will now have it to be pictured forth on the character of man: And, for this purpose, does He put the law in his heart and write it out upon his mind—and that virtue, which the first husband failed to enforce, does the second succeed in establishing—by engaging the gratitude and goodwill and affection of His disciples, on the side of it. That spiritual excellence which man could not find of himself, wherewith to purchase heaven—the Saviour finds for him, and spreads it

out in goodly adornment upon his person, so as to prepare him for heaven. What the first husband would have exacted as a price, the other lays on as a preparation; and the very duties that were required by the unrelenting taskmaster, but not rendered to him—are also required by the kind and friendly benefactor, who at the same time gives both a hand of strength and a heart of alacrity for all His services.

The difference between the two cases, is somewhat like that which obtains between a family establishment, and an establishment of hirelings. Every workman in the one is under the law of sobriety and good conduct, which, if he violate, he will forfeit his situation. But, if instead of a servant he is a son, it is not on any bargain of that kind, that he is understood to retain the place of security and maintenance, that he enjoys under the roof of his father. Yet, though sobriety and good conduct are not laid upon him in the way of legalism—who does not see, that the whole drift and policy of the patriarchal government under which he sits, are on the side of all that is virtuous and amiable, and praiseworthy on the part of its members? Who does not see, that the desire of a father may still, without any legal economy of do and live, be most earnestly set on all that is good and all that is graceful in the morality of his children? And while the thought never enters his bosom of any thing else, than that he should aid and sustain and advance them to the uttermost—yet, next to the desire that they should live, is it the most earnest desire of his heart that they should

live and do—do all that can purify or embellish their own character, do all that is honourable to the name they wear. And thus are we under Christ as our second husband, or under the new family government of heaven—no longer servants but relatives—admitted to all the privileges of life, under the paternal and protecting roof of Him, whose children we are in Christ Jesus. Still the conduct that as servants would not have been tolerated, as sons we are warned and chastised against; and the conduct that as servants would have been legally rewarded, as sons is most lovingly recommended to our strenuous and unceasing observation. And our heavenly Father loveth righteousness in us, and hateth iniquity in us; and that very law which He before enforced on the penalty of our eternal exclusion from His presence, He now engages us to choose and to follow as the eternal characteristic of all His family: And our business now is to put ourselves in training for the joys and the exercises of this great spiritual household; and for this purpose to cleave unto Christ as the Lord our Sanctifier—to betake ourselves to the aids of His grace, and resign our whole wills to the influence of that gratitude, which should lead us to love and to imitate and to obey Him. Thus shall we bring forth fruit unto God—even those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto His praise and unto His glory.

LECTURE XXXIX.

ROMANS, vii, 5, 6.

"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

THERE is a twofold change which takes place, at the moment of a believer's transition into the peace and privileges of the gospel. He in the first place passes into a new condition, as it respects his legal relationship with God; and he in the second place passes into a new character, as it respects the feelings and principles by which he comes to be actuated. You know what his relationship to God is, under the first economy in which he is situated. The moral Governor of our world ordained a law of rectitude, and authoritatively bound it on the observation of our species. That law has in every individual case been violated; and it were giving up the very conception of a moral government, for us to delude ourselves with the imagination, that a certain penalty shall not follow in the train of an offence, or that condemnation shall not follow in the train of disobedience. This in fact were stripping the jurisprudence of Heaven of its sanctions, and so reducing the divine administration to a nullity; and this is the perpetual tendency of those who have not yet been arrested by the awful reali-

ties of the question. They hurry themselves away from the contemplation of God's inviolable majesty, and uncompromising truth; and, in the pleasing dream of His tenderness for the infirmities of His erring children, would they lull themselves into a sweet oblivion of the alone elements, on which hinge the fate of their eternity. It is indeed most true, that God has all of the love and the compassion and the amiable kindness wherewith they have invested Him; and the gospel of Jesus Christ is the very development of these attributes—the very expression of a longing and affectionate Father after His strayed children, for the purpose of recalling them; but at the same time of recalling them in that one way, that shall illustrate the entire character and perfection of the Godhead. It is a dispensation of mercy free to all—only of mercy through the medium of righteousness—not of a mercy which dethrones the law, but of a mercy which magnifies that law and makes it honourable —not of such an indulgence as would pour contempt on the face of the Divinity, but such an indulgence as pours a deep and awful consecration over it. We sit under the economy of grace, but of grace in conjunction with holiness; and the overtures of reconciliation—coming to us as they do through the channel of a mysterious atonement, and an unchangeable priesthood, and a mediatorship sealed with the blood of an everlasting covenant—come to us, if I may so express it, through such an intervening ceremonial, as serves to guard and to dignify the Sovereign, even in the freest exercise of His clemency to the sinful—So that

they cannot by this path of access enter into peace with the Deity, without beholding Him in the awfulness of His purity, without feeling for Him the profoundest reverence.

From this rapid sketch of the great moral characteristics that sit on the economy of the gospel, you may come to understand how it is that the believer, on being translated into a new condition is also moulded and transformed into a new character. It is easy to profess the faith, and a mere profession will induce no radical change on the habits or the history; but if a man actually have the faith, then he has that which never fails to be the instrument of a great spiritual renovation. It is upon this principle, that he is prompted to comply with the overtures of the gospel; and, in so doing, he is made to feel what Nature never feels, and that is a calm and confident sense of his own reconciliation with God. The man who has never experienced this sensation, will not adequately conceive of its delights and its influences; yet still may he have some distant imagination of the new feelings and the new impulses, to which it is the harbinger. On this single event in the history of a believer's mind—that, whereas formerly there was in it a distrust or a jealousy of God, there is now in it the assured conviction that the Almighty is his Friend—on this single event, there is made to turn an entire revolution of its desires and its principles. In the language of the Psalmist, its bonds are indeed loosed; and, in place of that terror or that hopelessness which froze the soul into downright inactivity, is there

now the freeness of a grateful and confiding spirit —the alacrity of a willing obedience. "I will run in the way of thy commandments" says David "when thou hast enlarged my heart." It is just this enlargement that is opened up to the disciple, on his accepting of Christ, and so being delivered from the fears and the fetters of legality. The mountain of a before inextinguishable debt is now liquidated; and a discharge is given by which, from a peculiar skilfulness in the method of our salvation, the very justice of God, as well as His mercy, is guaranteed to the acceptance of the sinner; and he now has a comfort and an expectation in the service of that Being, before whom he had hitherto stood paralysed, as if in the hands of an unappeased and unappeasable creditor; and the holiness, which formerly he would have attempted in vain as his price or his purchase-money for that heaven the gate of which was shut against all his exertions, he now most cheerfully renders as his freewill offering and his preparation for that heaven whose gate is now open to receive him; nor can he look to the whole process and principle of his recalment to the favour of God, without seeing depicted therein the love which that God bears to righteousness, and the hatred which He bears to iniquity. The very contemplation from which he gathers peace to his breast, brings down upon it a purifying influence also. The same spectacle of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, that charms from the believer's heart the fears of guilt, tells him in most impressive terms of the evil of it: And that deed of amnesty, on which are inscribed the cha-

racters of goodwill to the sinner, is so emblazoned with the vestiges of God's detestation for sin, and so ratified by a solemn expiation because of it—that the intelligent disciple cannot miss the conclusion, nor will he fail to proceed upon it, that this is the will of God even his sanctification.

I trust that even those of you who have no experience of this transition at all, and to whom I still speak as in a mystery, will at least admit, that, when a man comes practically and powerfully under the operation of these influences, he must feel another moral pulse, and breathe another moral atmosphere from before. It is the doctrine of the Bible, that without supernatural aid the transition cannot be effected—that, even for the establishment of that faith which is the primary and presiding element of this great renewing process, an agency must descend upon us from on high which nevertheless it is our duty to watch and to pray for; and that unless from the first to the last we feel our dependence upon the Spirit of God, we shall not be upheld in those habits and affections of sacredness, which constitute our meetness for the inheritance that is above. But my purpose in introducing this remark, is to demonstrate how wide is the dissimilarity in the whole frame and forthgoings of a man's mind, after the accession of this influence from what they were before it—how certainly a new character, as well as a new condition, emerges from it: and, when you connect the change with that which the Bible reveals to us of the power from the upper sanctuary by which it has been effected, you will be at no loss to perceive on the

one hand, why converts to the faith of the gospel, as born of the Spirit are said to be in the Spirit; and, on the other, you will be at as little loss to perceive the meaning of the apostle's phrase, 'when we were in the flesh'—when we were what nature originally made us; and before that transition by believing, which introduced another relationship with God, and introduced us to another habit and another disposition in regard to Him.

The apostle tells us what took place both with him and with his disciples, at the time when they were in the flesh. Then did the motions of sins, which were by the law, work in their members to bring forth fruit unto death. We should like here to know in the first instance, what is meant by the phrase of 'sins which were by the law?' Some understand such things as were declared by the law to be sinful—as if the apostle had said, 'then did certain affections which by the law were pronounced sins, work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.' Others assign a still greater force to the law in this passage, as if the law had not only declared the affections in question to be sinful, but as if it was the law that had made them to be sinful. And indeed there is nothing hyperbolical in ascribing this function to the law—and that, on the principle that where there is no law there is no transgression. If a man break no rule he is no sinner—and if there was positively no rule to break, then sin were an impossibility. It is the law that characterises sin as sinful; that makes the affection to be sin which but for it would have been no sin at all, and that purely by forbidding it. So

that it is quite fair to understand the motions of sins which were by the law, to be not merely such motions or desires as the law had declared to be sinful, but also such motions and desires as the law had actually constituted sinful.

But admitting both these explanations as quite consistent the one with the other, and as alike applicable to the passage before us, there are others, who, additional to these, would ascribe to the law an influence of a still more active and efficient quality—as if it not only rendered certain affections sinful which but for it could not have obtained any such character, but as if it called forth into being the very affections themselves. They would make the law, not merely a discoverer and an assertor of sin, but they would make it a provocative to sin; or an instrument for calling it into existence, as well as an instrument for detecting and exposing it. They think themselves warranted in this explanation by the text, "that the law entered that the offence might abound;" and still more by the text, that "the law wrought in me all manner of concupiscence"—so that these last interpreters, in explaining the phrase of the motions of sin which were by the law, would not object to the idea of the law having actually excited these motions, and being thus the efficient originator of the sins that proceeded from them.

Nor is this view of the matter so much at war with the real experience of our nature, as may at first be supposed. The law may irritate and inflame the evil propensities of the heart to greater violence. The yoke, which it lays on human cor-

ruption, may cause that corruption to fester and tumultuate the more. The perverse inclination is just fretted to a stouter and more daring assertion of itself, by the thwarting resistance which it meets with; and you surely can conceive, nay, some of you may have found—how legal prohibitions, and remorseful visitations, and all the scruples of a remaining conscience and sense of rectitude in the bosom, which lie in the way of some vicious indulgence on which the appetite is set, may give the keener impulse to its demands, and make it more ungovernable than had there been no law. And when once all the barriers of principle are levelled, you may well imagine—how, on the pressure and the prohibition being removed, the depraved tendency will burst out into freer and larger excesses; and the harder the struggle was ere the victory over a feeling of duty had been obtained, the prouder will be the rebel's subsequent defiance to all its suggestions, and the more fierce and lawless will be his abandonment.

Nay, I can figure how the existence and felt obligation of a law may, on minds of a more delicate cast, have somewhat of the same operation. It is not too subtile a remark, for there is substantial and experimental truth in it—that, if the imputation of guilt lie hard upon a man, and he overwhelmed therewith sink into shame and into despondency—in addition to losing his sense of character, he may lose the character itself. He will come down in reality to the level of the surrounding estimation; and you have only to envelope him in an atmosphere of disgrace, in order

to impart a corresponding tinge of moral deterioration, to the living principles by which he is actuated. This proves of what importance it is, for upholding the tone of character in society—that we should all be predisposed to turn to our fellows with kindness and confidence and respect; and there is no saying how much the opposite habits of suspicion, and detraction, and fiendish delight in the contemplation of human ignominy, may contribute to lower the real worth and dignity of our species. But our present aim is to show, that, by the very establishment of a law, we become exposed to the sense of its violations; and this degrading sense works a regardlessness of character, and lays us open to other and larger violations: And thus the law may become not only declaratory of sin, but creative of sin; and that both by constituting certain actions to be sinful and multiplying these actions—And in all these ways may we understand the phrase of our apostle, even the motions of sins which are by the law.

The remaining clause of this verse, brings into view the distinction that there is, between feeling the motions or tendencies of sin, and the actual following of these tendencies. We have before abundantly insisted on the presence of sinful inclinations, even in the regenerated Christian; but that he differs from him who is still in the flesh, in that while the one obeys the inclinations, the other utterly refuses to indulge or to gratify them. Paul himself was not exempted from the motions of sins; and this is what he feelingly laments in the subsequent verses of this chapter. But then he did not

suffer these motions so to work in him, as to bring forth fruit unto death. It is of importance for the believer to understand, that, so long as he abides in his present framework, he occupies an infected tenement—he bears about with him a vile body charged with a moral virus from the presence of which death alone can deliver him; and against the power of which, it is his appointed warfare so to struggle, as that it shall not have the practical ascendancy over him. This is the inward constitution even of a saint upon earth—a constant urgency to evil. But what distinguishes him from the wilful sinner is, that he so resists this urgency that it does not prevail. There is no conflict with the one; for he walks altogether in the counsel of his own heart, and altogether in the sight of his own eyes. With the other there is the conflict of two opposite principles—of the Spirit lusting against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit; but so as that the Spirit has the habitual predominance, and by the Spirit he is practically led. They who are in the flesh have no such principle of counteraction within them to their evil tendencies—so that the motions of sins which are in them work in their members, so as to bring forth fruit unto death.

Paul now under the power of the gospel, and in the full career of his sanctification, speaks of his being in the flesh as a thing of remembrance. He could now look back upon that state, with the full advantage of a tender and enlightened conscience, that recognised as sinful what he before had never charged himself with, as incurring the guilt of any violation that should infer death. He was even

then free from the grosser profligacies of human wickedness; and lived in the deceitful security of one, who thought that all his duties were adequate to all his obligations. But he now could discern, that, unblemished as he was in respect of all outward enormities, he was then wholly given over to the idolatry of his own will; and that when tried by a law which questioned him of his godliness—of his preference for the Creator above the creature—of his obedience to the commandment, that he should covet and desire no earthly good, so much as the favour of that Being at whose bidding he ought to have subordinated all the affections of his heart—When thus tried, he could now plainly perceive, that, at that time, he was altogether carnal; and not the less so that at that time too, he with self was altogether satisfied. But the difficulty is to make that which was a thing of remembrance to Paul after he was converted, to make it a thing of present consciousness to those who are not yet converted. It is true, it was on the eve of his becoming a Christian that the conviction of sin first seized him—nay, this very conviction might have been the instrument of turning him to the gospel. And therefore it is the more desirable, to reach the same conviction to the hearts of those who are still in the flesh and now hearing me—to make them understand, how wholly it is that they are in the flesh—how unreservedly they give themselves up to the impulse of all those constitutional tendencies, which result from the existing mechanism of their soul and body and spirit, without any control upon it from the accession of a principle of godliness—

how much they live and talk and feel, just as they would have done though the idea of a God were never present to them—So, in fact, as to be as far as possible from the habit of glorifying the Lord with their soul and body and spirit, which are the Lord's.

For the purpose of awakening this conviction, the thing wanted is both a more tender and a more lofty conception of the divine law. Where there is glaring deceit, or fell malignity, or abandoned licentiousness in the action—there may be less of difficulty in tracing it to the operation of such propensities, as in truth work those palpable deeds of disobedience, which obviously and undeniably have their fruit unto death. But when the actions are those of industry for example in a lawful calling, or of light-heartedness in a gay and harmless amusement, or of courteousness in a circle of decent and estimable companionship—Surely they are such actions as a Christian may perform; and in what circumstances, it may be asked, do they indicate the performer of them to be still in the flesh, and under the dominion of such appetites as bring forth fruit unto death? Whatever difficulty we may feel in answering this question, it can be replied to, and on a clear and intelligent principle too, by that law which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. You are still in the flesh, if what you habitually do is not done unto God. However more amiable and more refined your species of worldliness may be than that of another, yet still, if you are not walking with God, you are walking after the flesh, and you move in a pictured

world of atheism. Such may be your dark and obtuse apprehensions of the spiritual morality of the law—that the general drift of your affections being away from God and set upon earthly things, may not appear to the eye of your contemplation as being very deeply tinged with the hue and character of criminality. But by the law itself this is declared to be a state and habit of the soul, that is exceeding sinful; and all that is devised and all that is done under that dominant and unquelled spirit of secularity, which is the universal spirit of unrenewed and unregenerated nature, is done by those who are still in the flesh, and all the desires of whose heart bring forth fruit unto death.

To quicken you from this state—to transfrom secularity into sacredness—to make those who are dead in trespasses and sins alive unto God—to usher you into other feelings and other principles, than those which unchristianised humanity ever can exemplify—This in fact is the great and ultimate design of the gospel, which, after translating you into another condition, also transforms you into another character.

Ver. 6. 'That being dead wherein we were held' might be rendered 'having died in Him in whom we were held.' The law has wreaked the whole force of its vindication on the head of our great sacrifice; and this is tantamount to our having borne the penalty ourselves; and so, by our death in Christ, being delivered from an infliction that has now gone by. The law has no further reckoning with us, on the old principle of do this and live. We are not now under what the apostle in another place

calls the ministry of condemnation, or under the authority of what he in the same place calls the letter that killeth. The commandment no longer frowns upon us, from the place which it before occupied when written on tables of stone; but it is now felt in persuasive influence within us, because written now on the fleshy tablets of our heart. It no longer acts as a master, who drives his reluctant slaves into a forced compliance with his bidding; or keeps them in perpetual terror, under the consciousness of a displeasure which no act or strength of theirs can allay. It is now their hearts' desire, instead of their constrained drudgery, to fulfil the requisitions of the law. The honest struggle in which they are embarked, is to make head against all that corruption of nature, which would incline them to disobedience; and now in the hands of an approving friend who deals out to them supplies of grace and strength for the warfare, they serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

So that whatever the change be, which takes place on this transition from nature to the gospel, it is not such a change as carries an exoneration from service along with it. It may be service in another spirit, and under a different stimulus from before; but still it is service. There is nothing in the true faith of Christianity, which exempts its disciples from the active performances of virtue; or from the most assiduous cultivation of all moral and of all spiritual excellence. So that there must in some way, be a misapprehension of the matter, when it is thought of the New Testament or of the evangelical system that is contained in it—as

if it annulled every motive to righteousness; or substituted the contemplation and the quietism of a mystic theology, in place of those moralities by which human life is adorned, and which send a powerful and practical impulse to the conduct on the busy walks of human society.

It may be difficult on this subject, to reach the understanding of those who have not the experimental feeling of it; but still perhaps they may be able to apprehend, what the leading characteristics are of that service which is rendered in the oldness of the letter. Under this economy, heaven is held out to man as the reward of his obedience —an inheritance for which he must pay value; and that never will be his without the purchase-money of certain specified merits, and certain prescribed services. There is something in this state of matters that is powerfully calculated to set man agoing; and more particularly when he understands it to be the alternative, that, should he lose heaven, he will have his part through eternity among the unquenchable torments and ever-during agonies of hell. And so without any love to virtue in itself, but from the single principle of regard to his own safety—without any native hatred of sin, but from the terror of that awful and intolerable vengeance which he conceives to be attached to it—may he be set on a most laborious course of dutiful and diligent and painstaking obedience. Now only suppose him to have a just imagination of the law, of its high demands, and of his countless deficiencies therefrom; and do you not perceive, that, after all, they are the jealousies of dis-

trust, and the scrupulosities of fearfulness, and the mercenary feelings of a bargain, and the extorted homage of sordid and slavish devoteeship, and in a word the desires or the dreads of selfishness—that these form the main constituents of that old legal service, which it is the purpose of the gospel to supersede? But the most blasting circumstance of the whole is, that the primary influence by which this course of obedience has been originated, and by which it continues to be sustained—is not the love of rectitude at all, but of a something in the shape of reward that is distinct from rectitude; and not a spontaneous aversion of the heart to sin, but the recoil of animal or physical nature from that suffering which follows in the train of sin. There are no great moral characteristics, to stamp or to signalize the activities of such a service; and to view man plodding and drivelling in this career, is to view him the mere creature of his own personal interests, the degraded bondsman of his own fears.

From this view of what it is to serve God in the oldness of the letter, let us proceed to the view of what it is to serve Him in the newness of the spirit. Under this economy the door of heaven is thrown open to a sinful world; and the signals of invitation are hung out from all its portals; and, instead of being proposed as the unattainable reward of an obedience utterly beyond the power of humanity, it is held forth in the character of an accessible gift by God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But then it is not a heaven of sensuality: It is a heaven of sacredness. It is not a place for

the recreation of animal nature: It is a place for the high recreation of the moral and spiritual faculties. It is described as the land of uprightness; and its main delight as lying in the play of holy affections, regaled by holy exercises. No man can purchase heaven by his virtue; yet no man can be happy in heaven without virtue—for virtue is the element of heaven; and without the preparation of a virtuous heart and a virtuous character, all the appropriate extacies of that pure and lofty region you would be incapable of sharing in. On this single change in the relation between virtue and heaven, do you pass from service in the oldness of the letter to service in the newness of the Spirit. Your virtue is not the price of heaven; for then all the jealousies of a bargain, and the freezing apprehensions of legality, would degrade it from a thing of spontaneous love to a thing of selfishness. But virtue is your indispensable preparation for heaven, to which you are freely beckoned in the gospel by all the tokens of welcome and good-will; and the man who has this believingly in his eye, forthwith enters with a new-born alacrity and delight on the career of holiness. He loves it, not for any distinct or separate reward, but he loves it for itself; and gratitude to Him, who poured out His soul as an expiation for his sins, engages his affection to it the more; and the soul, disengaged from all anxieties about a debt which Christ hath extinguished and a condemnation which Christ hath done away, is now at leisure and at liberty for the prosecution of all moral excellence; and the law, put into his heart by the Spirit of God,

is now his heart-felt delight, instead of being as before his hopeless and unavailing drudgery. He has become a new creature. The taste and the affection of holy angels have been given to him; and we refer to you all—on comparing the service that is prompted by a love for the reward of the law, with the service that is prompted by a love to the righteousness of the law—which of the two presents you with virtue in its most generous style of exhibition, and which of them it is that forms the highest and the noblest offering.

It might perhaps help to clear this matter, did we think that the great object of the economy under which we sit is to become like unto God. Now, it is not for reward that God is righteous; but the love of righteousness for itself is the original property of His nature. Neither is it under the dread of punishment, that He shuns iniquity; but it is because He hates iniquity. There is nought of legalism in the morality of the Godhead; but it is a morality which springs from the primitive and emanating fountains of His own character, and spreads out in free and spontaneous efflorescence over all His ways. It is not with a prospective regard to some future heaven, that is to be adjudged to Him from a tribunal which is loftier than Himself—it is not under an influence like this, that God is so observant of truth, and so strict in justice, and of such unwearied beneficence. These in fact have constituted His heaven from eternity; and it is just this spiritual heaven, the delight of which lies in its love and in its holiness—it is this, and no other, that awaits those who are

here admitted to the number of His children through the faith which is in Christ, and have the family likeness imparted to them. Then it is that you pass from the oldness of the letter to the newness of the Spirit—when, instead of toiling at the observations of virtue for a sordid reward distinct and separate from virtue itself, you are prompted to the observations of virtue by the spontaneous love which you bear to it. This alone is true moral excellence, purified of all that taint of selfishness by which it were otherwise debased and vitiated; and it is only when transformed into this, that you are formed again after the image of God in righteousness and in true holiness

LECTURE XL.

ROMANS, vii, 7—13.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

The apostle had before affirmed as much, as that it was the law which constituted that to be sinful, that without the law could have had no such character ascribed to it—nay perhaps, that even the law called forth into living energy and operation, certain sinful affections, which, but for it acting as a provocative, might have lain within us in a state of latent and of unobserved dormancy. And he seems to feel in this verse, as if this might, in the apprehension of his readers, attach the same sort of odiousness to the law that is attached to sin itself. This charge against the law, he repels with the utmost vehemence and decision, and that sort of readiness which carries somewhat the expression of indignancy along with it. And the first consideration that he calls to his aid is, that the law acted as a

discoverer of sin. He had not known sin but by the law; and he had not known lust, or as some would understand this clause, he had not known the sinfulness of lust, or he had not known lust to be sinful, except the law had said 'thou shalt not covet.' It is no impeachment against the evenness of a ruler, that, by the application of it to any material surface, you can discover all that is crooked or unequal thereupon. On the contrary its very power of doing so proves how straight and unerring it is in itself; and the more minute the deviations are which it can manifest to the eye of the observer, the greater is the evidence that is afforded to the perfection of the instrument that you are using. The light of day may reveal a place of impurity, or a soil in the colouring of the object that you contemplate, which could not be recognised under the shade of midnight—nor yet in the duskiness of approaching even. Yet who would ever think on that account, of ascribing to the beautiful element of light, any of that pollution or deformity, which the light has brought forth to observation? The character of one thing may come more impressively home to our discernment, by its contrast with the character of another thing; and the stronger the contrast is between the two, the more intense may our perception become of the distinct and appropriate character of each of them. But it were indeed very strange, if the dissimilarity of these two things, should be the circumstance that led us to confound them; or if when because placed beside each other, the one became more palpably an object of disgust than if viewed sepa-

rately—the other should not on that very account, become more palpably and more powerfully the object of our admiration. When one man stands before you in the full lustre and loveliness of moral worth, and another loathsome in all the impurities of vice and wickedness—the very presence of the first, may generate in the heart of the observer, a keener sensation of repugnancy towards the second; and this not surely because they have any thing in common, but because they have every thing in wide and glaring opposition. It were indeed a most perverse inference to draw, from the fact of virtue having shed an aspect of greater hatefulness on the vice that is contiguous to it—that therefore it must gather upon itself, the same hue and the same hatefulness which it has imparted to the other. This were altogether reversing the property of a foil, which is certainly not to obscure but to heighten the opposite excellence. And the same of sin and of the law. The law is the ruler which marks and exposes the crookedness of sin—not because crooked itself, but because precisely and purely rectilinear. And it is the light which reveals the blackness and the darkness of sin—not because these are its own properties, but because of its clear and lucid transparency. And it is the bright exemplar of virtue, which rebukes and vilifies all the wickedness that it looks upon,—not surely because of any vileness imputable to it; but because of the force wherewith it causes this imputation to descend, from the elevation of its own unclouded purity, on the dross and the degradation and the tarnish by which it is surrounded. So that

to the question, 'Is the law therefore sin because it makes sin known,'—the answer is No. It makes sin known, not because of any participation at all in its character, but because of its strong and total dissimilarity.

Ver. 8. But from the first clause of this verse it would appear, that the law does more than make the deformity more noticeable and more odious than before. It is even the occasion of aggravating that deformity, by making sin more actively rebellious, and causing it to be the more foul and more abundant in its deeds of atrocity. There can be no doubt of the fact, that the law of God does not cure what the apostle here calls the concupiscence of men, or in other words the desire of man's heart towards any forbidden indulgence; and this desire not being cured by the law, is just thereby heated and exasperated the more. The very remorse that follows in the train of any violation, is of itself a constant feeder of the mind with such suggestions and images, as serve to renew the temptation to what is evil. It is ever bringing the thoughts into contact with such objects as before overcame the purposes of the inner man, and may again overcome them; and the very consciousness of having broken a law, by perpetually adhering to the heart and pervading it with the conviction of sin, is just as perpetually operating on the heart with the excitements of sin. The man who does what is morally wrong, and thinks no more of it, may never repeat the transgression till its outward influences have again come about him, after it may be, the interval of many days or months, and prevailed over him as

before. But the man who is conscience-stricken because of his iniquity, and who is ever brooding under a sense of guilt and degradation, and who ever and anon recurs to it as the ceaseless topic of his many cogitations and many cares—Such a man has the image of allurement present to his thoughts, and that too during the whole extent of those frequent and lengthened intervals of time, when they are not present to his senses. And thus does the law turn out an occasional cause, why with him there should be both a more intense and a more abiding fermentation of all the sinful appetites of our nature,—than with another, who, reckless of law and undisturbed by its accusing voice, just lives at random and more under the impulse of outward events than of his own inward propensities and inward processes. And, what adds to the helplessness of this whole calamity is, that, while the law thus scourges the unhappy victim of remorse, it gives him no strength and no encouragement for the warfare. It gives a new assailing force to his enemies, but no force of resistance to himself,—because depriving him of the inspiring energy that is in hope, it gives him in its place the dread and the desperation of an outlaw. It tells how by its unrelenting power and its irrevocable curse, that he is undone; and he, by a process that in fact is oft exemplified in the sad history of many an apostate, may, just because of his sensibilities at one time to the law of God, have now become the more sunken in all profligacy, the more daring and determined in all wickedness.

And yet the law here is not in fault. It is sin

which is in fault. The law is not the proper and primary fountain of all this mischief. It is sin which took occasion by the law—which, at sight of the law, strengthened itself the more in its own character; and felt a more decided impulse than ever, to the emission of all those evil influences on the heart of man, by which all manner of concupiscence is wrought therein. Which of the two parties then, whether is it sin or the law, that deserves the blame and the odiousness? It is conceivable of the worthless reprobate, that he may be brought into the presence of him who stands high and pure and undoubted in all moral estimation; and that he sickens, either with envy or in despair, at the contemplation of an excellence which he cannot reach; and that the reaction which descends upon him from the elevation of another's virtue he is now looking to, may but fortify him with greater spite and tenaciousness than ever in all his purposes of evil. Though such be practically the result of such an interview, will not the sainted holiness and integrity of the good man, still shine out in the same cloudless and unimpeached lustre as before? and will not all the hardening and all the resoluteness of depravity which his presence has created in the bosom of another, just serve to bring down upon that other a still feller and heavier imputation? And it is just so with the two parties, whose merits the apostle is employed in adjusting in the passage before us. It is not the commandment which works all manner of concupiscence. But it is sin which taketh occasion by the commandment; and it all goes to aggravate the moral hideousness of our na-

ture, that, on the approach of so pure and righteous a visitor as the law of God, it is thereby prompted to break forth into more audacious rebellion, and to give itself up to the excesses of a more loose and lawless abandonment.

And it is in this sense, and in this sense only, that the law is the occasion of death to those who have disobeyed it. This sore infliction is primarily and properly due to sin, which taketh occasion by the law. It is conceivable, as we have already said, that the very company of a man of righteousness, might so distance and so degrade in his own eyes a man of iniquity—as that, with the desperate feeling of an outcast from all honourable estimation, he might henceforth give himself over to the full riot and extravagance of villany. He might even under this process of depravation have become a murderer; and so entailed upon himself a death of vengeance, for the death of violence that he inflicted upon another. But who would ever think of laying either his own blood, or the blood of his victim, to the door of him whose excellence had only called out into more open decision and display the hatefulness of his own character? Even though this man of righteousness had been his judge, and had passed upon him the sentence of execution for his crimes—yet who does not see, that his crimes are all his own; and that even though provoked unto being by the view of another's worth, or by the galling prohibitions of the righteous example or of the righteous authority that had been brought to bear upon him—that still this only served to blazon and to enhance his own turpitude, without

transferring one particle either of its guilt or of its foulness to the pure and honourable arbiter of his destiny? And so again of the parties—even sin and the law. The law is the exemplar of perfect virtue, and it is the expounder of perfect virtue; and she may further be regarded as the executioner of virtuous wrath on all who have disowned and have defied her. And if so be, that they have been excited to a prouder and more tumultuous defiance, by the very restraints which the presence of the law has imposed upon them—this just makes their sin more exceeding sinful; both bringing it out to more glaring exhibition, and stamping a deeper atrocity upon its character.

Thus much for the first clause of this 8th verse—and, as we want not to repeat more than enough, we would make these illustrations serve for the 10th, 11th, and 13th verses, which we now read out in your hearing—only adding one observation about sin taking occasion by the commandment to *deceive* in order to destroy. It slays its victim by a process of deception, of which deception the law is made the instrument. It may do this in various ways and by various wiles. As the man's remorse is continually leading him to brood over the transgression—so sin may take advantage of this employment, and follow it up by leading the man to dwell as constantly on the temptation which led to it. Or it may represent the man to himself as the doomed and irrecoverable victim of a law, that can never be appeased by any subsequent obedience—and, thus, through means of this law again, may it drive him onward to the profligate excesses of a

ruthless desperado. Or, changing its device and its policy, may it soothe him in a favourite though forbidden indulgence, by setting forth to his remembrance the many offerings which he hath already rendered to this same law; and the many conformities of honesty, or temperance, or compassion, or courteousness, by which he still continues to do it honour. And lastly, it may even turn his very compunction into a matter of complacency; and persuade the man, that, in defect of the homage of his obedience to the law, it is at least well that he gives it the homage of his regret for his many violations—and so with a feeling of very tolerable security, may he spend his life in a constant alternation of sinning and sorrowing; of first offending his conscience by the freedoms of his life, and then of quieting it again by the feelings of a bosom, where all sense of the commandment and of its obligations has not yet decayed into utter annihilation. And in these various ways, may a process of depravation be going on, under the guise of much solemn and reverential acknowledgment; and the man be betrayed into peace where there is no peace; and sin be ripening into full ascendancy, even where its triumphs are mingled with the terrors and the sighs of penitency; and at length, through the medium of many legal formalities and legal feelings, acquiring a supreme authority in that heart which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

We now direct your attention to the last clause of the eighth verse. 'For without the law sin was dead'—dead in respect of all power to con-

demn you, had there been actually no law, or had its authority been really extinguished; and dead in respect of its inability to stir up the alarms of condemnation in your heart, had the sense or feeling of its authority been extinguished: and, in both cases, dead as to its power of seducing or enslaving you, by means of a remorse that were thus obliterated, or of terrors that would thus never agitate the bosom. All this, on the supposition of being without the law, or without any sense in your heart either of its high requisitions, or of the high and unalterable sanctions which enforced the observation of them. And in the next verse Paul is visited with the remembrance of his own state, in a former period of his history—when ignorant as he was of the exceeding breadth of God's commandment; when unaware of the reach which it took, into the very secrecy of his affections and desires; when, not adverting to its character as a searching and a spiritual law, he looked forward to a life of favour here and of blessedness hereafter, on the strength of his many outward compliances and his many literal observations. He was thus alive without the law once; and it was not till the commandment came—not till it revealed to him the whole extent of its authority and its cognizance—not till he was made to see what its lofty demands were, and what his wretched and irrecoverable deficiencies therefrom—Not till then was it, that sin revived in him; that its terrors and its convictions awoke upon his soul; that it stirred him up to such restless and unavailing struggles, as shortened not his distance from perfection: And perhaps

while it whetted his remorse, gave a darker and more desperate character to his rebellion; or at all events disposted him from the proud security of his old imaginations; and made him see, that, instead of a victorious claimant for the rewards of the law, he was the trembling victim of its menaces and its penalties.

Ver. 9. The state that Paul here describes as being at one time his own, is in fact the prevalent state of the world. The men of it live in tolerable comfort and security all their days; and that, just because blind to those awful and besetting realities by which they are encompassed—and dead to the tender invitations of the gospel, only because dead to the terrifying menaces of the law. They are without all adequate sense of its obligations, or of the power and certainty of His wrath who established it; and who will see to it that its authority shall be maintained, and its many threats and many proclamations shall one and all of them be verified. It is because the sinner is without the law, or without any strong and affecting conviction of all the places in his heart and in his history to which its government extends—that he sees not the danger of the condition which he occupies, nor reflects upon himself as a transgressor, whose condemnation even unto spiritual and everlasting death is altogether due to its violated honours. Not till the law came, did Paul look upon himself as a doomed and devoted malefactor, thankful for the offered pardon of the gospel, and humbly acquiescing in its proposals and its ways for his acceptance with God. And thus it is that we count it so highly important,

when the Spirit lends His efficacy to our demonstrations of the might and majesty of the divine law—when He thereby arouses the careless sinner out of his lethargies, and causes him to see that there is a coming wrath from which there is no escaping but by an offered gospel—when by the terrors of the Lord, He persuades the man to flee for refuge to the hope set before him there—when He opens his eyes to the dread exhibition of his own guilt, and of the fiery vengeance that out of Christ and away from His cross is sure to overtake it—when He thus pursues him as with an arrow sticking fast, and lets him not alone, till, an awed and a humbled penitent, he is glad to stretch forth his hand to the propitiation which God hath set forth unto the world, and so to wash out his sins in the blood of the Lamb.

Ver. 12. The apostle had already delivered the law from all charge of odiousness, because of the death which it inflicted; and because of the sin which it exposed, and even excited with greater fierceness and power in a sinner's heart. And now does he render it the positive homage of all that acknowledgment, which was due to its real character—as the tablet or the representation of all moral excellence—bodied forth from the conceptions of the Divinity Himself, into an authoritative model of perfection—and (had man taken upon his soul the fair and the full impression of it) conveying from Him who is the fountain-head of virtue, the lovely impress of its accomplishments and its graces to the creatures whom He had formed. If the law be the occasion of death, or of more fell

and frightful depravity, to its subjects—it is not because of any evil that is in its character; but because of the evil of that sin which is in their nature. Such an effect may demonstrate the malignity of sin, or show more strikingly than before the exceeding sinfulness thereof. But it can in no way be construed into an impeachment against the law—which stands exonerated of all the mischief, that ought properly and primarily to be referred to the corruption of our own hearts. That vice should gather itself into an attitude of more stout and shameless defiance, at the sight or at the bidding of virtue—is indeed a fell aggravation of all the enormities, wherewith it is chargeable; but still virtue shines forth with untarnished lustre, or rather enhanced in all fair and righteous estimation, when, thus placed by the side of this contiguous worthlessness: Or the law by which virtue is pourtrayed, and virtue is enacted, still retains her primitive and endearing characters of being wise and holy and just and good.

This may lead to the solution of a question, by which the legal heart of man often feels itself embarrassed and exercised—a question which we have often attempted to treat and to resolve in your hearing; and by which we may have succeeded in laying for a season the obstinate legalism of nature. But it recurs again with its unquelled difficulties, and its unappeased longings after a reward and a righteousness of its own; and, with its eye open to the palpable truth, that God still urges upon us that very law, by which our justification is impossible—that, under the economy of the gos-

pel, works are still in imperative demand, even after grace has been proclaimed to us as the only way of salvation—the perplexity from which it wants to be unriddled is, Why should the law that is now deposed from the office to which it was at one time ordained of being a minister unto life; and has now become a minister unto death—why should it still be kept up in authority and importance, and obedience to it be as strenuously required, and a conformity of character to it be held as indispensable, under our present dispensation as under the old one?

In order that God should will our obedience to the law, it is not necessary to give to obedience the legal importance and efficacy that it had under the old dispensation. All that is necessary to make God delight in the morality of His creatures, and that He should please their observation of it, is that this morality be to Him in itself a gladdening object of contemplation. There was a material chaos at the outset of our present system—out of which the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters, educed the loveliest forms of hill and dale and mighty ocean and waving forests, and all that richness of bloom and verdure and vegetable beauty which serves to dress and to diversify the landscapes of nature. And it is said that God saw every thing to be good, and rejoiced over the works of His creative hand. Now there was no legality whatever in this most obvious and intelligible process. The ornaments of a flower, or the gracefulness of a tree, or the soft magnificence of a whole extended and outspread scenery—these are

not and cannot be the offerings of inanimate matter, by which it purchases the smile and the regards of the Divinity. And yet it is with the smiles of complacency, that the Divinity does regard them. The Almighty Artist loves to behold the fair composition that He Himself has made; and wills each of His works to be perfect in its kind; and dwells with satisfaction and joy on the panorama of visible excellence, that He has spread before His throne; and rather would He look to the freshness of its many decorations, than to a universal blight of nature, when every flower should sicken upon its stalk, and all those pencilled hues by which the surface of our earth is adorned should be swept away by the pestilence of a tainted atmosphere above it. So that in a case to which legality is quite inapplicable, does God prefer His creatures to be of one form and comeliness rather than another —does He love beauty rather than deformity, and harmony rather than confusion; and when He did put forth on the dark and chaotic mass of warring elements the power of His transforming hand, it was to spread out a scene of loveliness before Him, and to lavish upon it the gayest and the goodliest adornments.

And the same of the moral taste of the Godhead. He loves what is wise and holy and just and good in the world of mind; and with a far higher affection too, than He loves what is fair and graceful and comely in the world of matter. He has a pleasure in beholding what may be styled a moral comeliness of character; and the office of His Spirit at this moment, is to evolve this beauteous ex-

hibition out of the chaos of ruined and rebellious humanity. And to forward this process, it is not necessary that man be stimulated to exertion by the motives of legalism. All that is necessary is, that man be submitted to the transforming operations of the divine Spirit; and that he shall willingly follow His impulses, at the will of that God who requires it of him. And must God, we ask, ere He can gratify His relish for the higher beauties of morality and of mind, first have to make a bargain about it with His creatures? Is not His creative hand as free to follow the impulses of His taste for the beauties of moral, as for the beauties of material landscape? Out of the corporeal chaos did He, in obedience to His love of order and gracefulness in our visible world, educe all that symmetry and splendour and perfect organization by which we are surrounded, and rejoices over them. This was His will of matter, even its harmonization. And in like manner, does He now operate on a spiritual chaos; and out of the malice and impurity and rebellious deviation from God, and all the jarring influences by which it is agitated and deformed, does He educe love and peace and beauteous accordancy with the perfect law of heaven. This is His will of mind, even its sanctification. He does not need to truckle or negotiate with us upon the subject, or to enter into any such legal understanding on the matter, as in fact to lay the burden of an impossibility on the whole process —for, in truth, man has forfeited every legal reward; and incurred every legal penalty—So that the whole of this economy must be set aside, and

man be approached by some new power, and be plied with some new expedients, ere he can be restored to the holiness and the excellence in which he was created. Meanwhile it is the will of God that he should be restored; and just as He rejoiced at every step in that process, whereby the chaos of matter was evolved into a fair and orderly system—so does He rejoice in that process by which we grow unto the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus; and He looks with intent eye on the church that He is now forming out of the world and on every member of it—So that, released though you all be from the old legal enforcements of that commandment which is contained in ordinances, still is it the thing which His heart is set upon, and still do you testify your love to God and your desire to comply with His will, that you keep His commandments.

It is thus, and on this principle, that God wills you to be holy and just and good; but these are the very attributes which the text gives to the law, or to the commandment—so that though the old relationship between you and the law is dissolved, still it is this very law with the requirements of which you are to busy yourselves, during the whole of your abode in the world; and with the graces and accomplishments of which you must appear invested before Christ at the judgment-seat. It was written first on tables of stone, and the process was then that you should fulfil its requisitions as your task, and be paid with heaven as a reward. It is now written by the Holy Ghost on the tablets of your heart; and the process is now that you are

made to delight in the law after the inward man—and when released, as you will be by death, from the corruptions of the outward man, heaven will be open for your admission as the only place that is fitted to harbour and to regale you. You know of gold that it has two functions. With gold you may purchase a privilege, or with gold you may adorn your person. You may not be able to purchase the king's favour with gold; but he may grant you his favour, and when he requires your appearance before him, it is still in gold he may require you to be invested. And thus of the law. It is not by your own righteous conformity thereto that you purchase God's favour; for this has been already purchased by the pure gold of the Saviour's righteousness, and is presented to all who believe on Him. But still it is with your own personal righteousness, that you must be gilded and adorned. It is not the price wherewith you have bought heaven, but it is the attire in which you must enter it; and thus do we answer the question, why it is that the law is still kept up in authority and importance, and obedience to it is as strenuously required, and a conformity of character to it is held as indispensable, under the new dispensation as under the old one.

LECTURE XLI.

ROMANS, vii, 14—25.

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Ere I enter into detail upon these verses, let me come forth with a preliminary argument upon that which appears to be the subject of them.

There is one thing which the common experience of all, whether they be in the faith of the gospel or not, must have made perfectly familiar to them; and that is the exceeding difference which they have often felt, between the whole tone and temper of their mind at one time from what it is at another time. There are many of you who can recollect, that in church, and when under the influence of a powerful demonstration from the pulpit—you caught

something like the elevation and purity of heaven upon your souls; and that then when you passed into another atmosphere, whether at home in the midst of your family, or abroad among the collisions of society and business, the whole of this ethereal temperament went into utter dissipation; and you became a peevish and sensual and earthly creature. Some of you may have marked it well how differently it fares with you in the hour of your devotional retirement, and in the season of your exposure to the manifold urgencies of the world—how the heart seems to have passed as entirely into another mood by the transition, as if it had been transformed into another heart altogether —that in the one state you can rise on the wings of divine contemplation, and breathe of the air of the upper sanctuary; and in the other you sink down to the common-place of tame and ordinary life, and become as other men. We think that this may have been the finding of many who are not, in the spiritual and substantial sense of the term, Christians at all; but who, in the mere fervency of natural emotion, can be put into something like a glow of sacredness, whether by a certain power of sympathy with the preacher, or in the musings and meditative exercises of their own solitude. It will not surprise them when they are told of two principles in our moral constitution —which, by the ascendancy of the one or the other of them for the time being, may cause the same man to appear in two characters that are not only different, but are in total and diametric opposition. Of this their own piety, meagre and capricious and

merely sentimental though it be, may have given them a very strong experimental illustration: And so have convinced them how possible it is, that, in one and the same individual of our species, there may be one set of tendencies, which if followed out, would liken him to the seraph who revels among the choirs and extacies of Paradise; and also another set of tendencies, which, if also followed out, would liken him to the veriest grub-worm that moils for lucre upon earth, or finds all his satisfaction in the basest and most sordid gratifications.

But we further conceive that the same thing may be rendered palpable to those, who are so far alienated in worldiness, as to be totally unobservant of piety—whether in its private or in its public observations; and who, apart from every experience of their own frame either at church or in the closet, may still have been sensible to other exhibitions of themselves, which might reconcile them to the doctrine which we shall forthwith labour to establish. Even they have often been admitted to such a view of human nature upon their own personal character and history, as might prove how strangely compounded it is of diverse and opposite inclinations. So extensive in our day is the class of novel-readers,—that we may have the chance of bearing home upon not a few who are here present, when we appeal to a very common experience among those who are most enamoured of this species of literature—how readily their hearts have conformed, to all that was bright or beautiful in the moral scenery of fiction—how they could kindle into its heroism, and melt into its tenderness; and weep with very

delight over its representations of worth, or generosity, or devoted attachment; and appear for a season, and while under the power of that masterhand which pictures out virtue with such force and exquisiteness, to be assimilated themselves to that which they so vehemently admire. And yet all goeth to flight, when again ushered as before into the scenes of familiar existence; and the mind of the reader is speedily vulgarized again, to the level of all that is tame and ordinary around it—Insomuch, that he, who, from one part of his nature, could rise to lofty enthusiasm while engaged in the contemplation of rare and romantic excellence—could, from another part of his nature, pass in less than half an hour to the very plainest characteristic of plain and every-day humanity; and either fret, or scold, or laugh, or give full indulgence to every one of those very ordinary passions, which come out of the feelings and the fellowship of very ordinary men.

There is one principle of our constitution, that tends as it were to sublime the heart up to the poetry of human life; and there is another principle, that, operating as a drag, weighs the heart as if helplessly down to the prosé of it. There is not a man who mixes literature with business, as many do who are now before me, that might not be conscious in themselves of two warring elements, which, if they were to change places, so that the one which wont to be the superior shall become the subject—it would make a new creature of him. There are two rival appetites, in being at least, though only one may so domineer as to have all the power and practical ascendancy over the cha-

racter. But in point of fact, were the other to rebel and to rise into a gathering strength, that should dethrone the old tyrant and establish its own supremacy—then would the spirit of the mind undergo an entire renovation; and the phrase of his 'being born again' were not too strong a one, to express the transition of heart and of habit that should take effect upon him. But meanwhile it will suffice that you be aware of certain moving forces, that do exist at the same time in your moral economy; and which act in directions that are contradictory the one to the other—and according to the prevalence of which it is, that you may appear either in one light to the eye of an observer, or in another that is altogether opposite.

We have heard of a great lady proprietor in one of our slave plantations, who never could read a fictitious tale of suffering but with tenderness and tears—yet could enforce the severest punishments on her wretched and overdriven negroes; and could look unrelentingly on, while she beheld the rigid execution of them. This may be an extreme case; but it is no anomaly in the character of our species. It is but one of a kindred and very extensive class of phenomena; and which all go to prove such to be the nature of man, that while under one sort of influence he may be so operated upon as to exhibit all that is graceful in sensibility, he, under another sort of influence, may be so operated upon as to act the monster of savage cruelty among the ill-fated victims who are under him. The individual of whom we have now reported to you, might, of all others, have been well prepared to admit the

truth of that doctrine, by which it is affirmed, that, under a certain influence, the current of right feeling may flow smoothly and spontaneously through the heart; while, if that influence be withdrawn and the heart be abandoned in consequence to itself, it may evince, by the abundant product of its own natural atrocities, how deceitful it is above all things and how desperately wicked.

A very conspicuous instance of the same thing is the susceptibility of the heart to the power of music. You have seen how the song that breathed through every line of it the ardour of disinterested friendship, and a generous contempt for all selfishness—you have seen how it blended into one tide of emotion, the approving sympathies of a whole circle of companionship. One would think, on looking along this festive board, that, with the harmony of sounds, there was a harmony of kindness and confidence and mutual goodwill in every bosom; and that each, awakened as it were to a fresh moral existence, had been suddenly formed as by enchantment, into one devoted phalanx of sworn and trusty brotherhood. It is hard to imagine that on the morrow, the competitions and the concealments and the jealousies of rival interest will be as busily active as before; and will obliterate every trace of the present enthusiasm. And yet there is in it no hypocrisy whatever. It is not a thing put on of artifice; but a thing that genuinely and honestly hath come, out of the living excitement that is now in operation. The heart is actually attuned to the very cordiality which the music has inspired; and while the notes still

vibrate on the ear, the play of high and honourable feelings is upheld in the bosom—till the last echoes have died away from the remembrance, and the man again lapses into the same cold and creeping and selfish creature that he ever was.

But the finest recorded example of this fascination, is that of the harp of David on the dark and turbulent spirit of Saul—nor was there ever a more striking exhibition of the power of melody, than when the native outrageousness of this monarch's temper was thereby overborne. During the performance of the son of Jesse, all the internal fires and furies by which his bosom was agitated, seem to have been lulled into peacefulness. The tyrant was disarmed; and, as if the cunningly played instrument had conveyed of its own sweetness into his heart, he became meek and manageable as a child. We are glad that out of Scripture history, we can draw such a case of illustration; and we now proceed to unfold the uses of it, in the argument that lies before us.

First then, it is said of Saul that he was refreshed and became well, under the operation of this music. In which case, it was his duty to recur to it in every hour of necessity—to call in the harp, on the very first approaches of the threatening visitation upon his spirit; and if he could not, in the native gentleness of his own heart, maintain a serenity of feeling and conduct to all around him, it was his business ever and anon to ply that artificial expedient, by which alone it seems that the perennial kindness and tranquillity of his feelings could at all be upholden.

And secondly, you may further conceive of Saul that he succeeded in this great moral achievement upon his own spirit—that, on the strength of the foreign application ever at hand and never neglected by him, he actually won the conquest over the rebellious tendencies of his inner man, and steadily maintained it; and, as the effect of this habitual recurrence to the soothing air by which all the tumults of his soul were pacified, that there was benevolence in every look, and such a placid softening of tone and manner, as made all his domestics happy and him beloved by them all.

Now, thirdly, I would have you all to consider how Saul should have felt as well as acted, under the consciousness of what he natively and originally was. He in very deed, and because of the power that lay in the musical instrument, may have both imported into his own heart all the feelings, and diffused among those around him all the fruits of that benignity which had thus been awakened. But although he should in this way perpetuate the mastery of a good and gracious principle in his soul—should he not still have been base in his own eyes, when he bethought him of the quarter from which it behoved to come!—that, to sustain his moral being, he had to live on supplies from abroad, because in himself there was the foul spirit of a maniac and a murderer; and it would have become this very monarch, even at the time when he most felt the play of kindness in his own heart, and when he most brightened the hearts of others by the courtesy and the condescension that he shed over them—even then, was it most his part, to

mourn the delinquencies of his inner man; and to loathe the savage propensities which fain would tumultuate there, in dust and in ashes.

But lastly, do you not perceive, that, in this state of matters, there were really no mystery at all, though the actual serenity of Saul's temper and his own self-abhorrence because of its native fierceness and asperity had kept pace the one with the other; and that in the very proportion of that fearfulness and aversion wherewith he looked to himself, because of his inherent vices, would he become fruitful in all the virtues that were opposed to them? It were just the humility of his downward regards upon his own soul, that would be the instrument of raising it to the highest perfection of which it was capable; and because he had no trust in the unborrowed energies within, that he would fetch aliment from without, for the preservation and the growth of all those moralities whereof he was most destitute. The harp would be his perpetual companion, or never beyond the reach of his calling for it. That sense of depravity, which prompted the self-abasement of his spirit, would prompt an unceasing recurrence to that by which its outbreakings were repressed; and so the more intense his detestation of his own character, would be the vigour and efficacy of that alone practical expedient, by which his character was converted and transformed.

And thus, in all its parts, does it hold of a Christian. He knows that in his own proper nature dwelleth no good thing. He is aware of his native ungodliness; and the experience of every day

brings fresh and more humiliating discoveries of it to his conscience. He feels that in himself he is like Saul without the harp—not perhaps so violent and vindictive as he was among his fellows; but sharing with the whole human race in the virulence of their antipathies against a God of holiness. The streams of his disobedience may not be of the same tinge and impregnation as that of the Hebrew king; but they emanate like his from a temple of idolatry in the heart, that would constantly issue forth of its own produce on the outward history. The Christian feels that in that part of his constitution which is properly and inherently his own, there is a deeply-seated corruption, the sense of which never fails to abash and to humble him; and thus, Christian though he be, he never ceases to exclaim—'Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this law of sin, from this abiding and impetuous tendency to evil?'

What then, it may be asked, is it, which serves to mark him as a Christian? Not most assuredly that he is free of a carnal nature, tainted all over with foullest leprosy—but that he has access to an influence without, by which a healing virtue is mingled with it, and all its rebellious tendencies are thereby overborne. The only distinction between the disciple and the unbeliever is, that the one uses the harp, and the other has neither faith in its efficacy nor desire for the effect of its operation. The Christian hath learned whither to flee in every hour of temptation; and thus it is that a purifying influence descends upon his soul. It cometh not through the medium of the ear, and

upon the vehicle of sounds; but it cometh through the medium of the understanding, and upon the vehicle of thoughts. It is not by calling the music that he loves into his presence; but by calling the truth that he believes into his memory—it is thus that he harmonises the else disorderly affections of his heart; and while he feels that all within is corruption, he at the same time knows of an agency without by which the mutiny of its sinful appetites is staid.

There was a personal agent called in by Saul, when he had to be calmed out of his wild perturbations—even the son of Jesse; and this he did by evolving a certain harmony of sounds on the ear of the Jewish monarch. And so He is a living and a personal agent, who overrules the sinful and the wayward propensities of a believer's heart; but this He does by evolving certain truths on the believer's understanding. In the former case, the power to soothe lay materially and directly in the music—though, to bring it into contact with the organ of hearing, there needed one to perform it. In the latter case, the power to sanctify lies materially and directly in the doctrine—though, to bring it into contact with the organ of mental perception, there needeth one to present it—even the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to bring all things to our remembrance. And so, my brethren, when assailed by temptation from without, or like to be overborne by the tyranny of your own evil inclinations, is it your part to summon gospel truth into the presence of your mind; and, depending on the Holy Ghost, to go forth and meet His manifest-

tions, as He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto your soul; and, precious fruit of your believing meditation on the realities of our most holy faith, will you be sure to find, as you look forward with hope to that mercy which is unto eternal life, that the heart will be purified thereby. It will be kept in the love of God; and this will attune it out of all discord and disorder. But never, throughout the whole of this process, will it be led to count on the worth or the power of its own internal energies. The sense of its depravity will ever be present to the conscience; and hanging on an influence that is foreign to itself, will it feel as helplessly dependent on a medicine from without, as did Saul when he summoned to his apartment that melody which charmed all the heat and vindictiveness of his spirit away from him. It is thus that the believer while he looks upon himself as nothing, or rather loathes himself as a diseased sinner, is ever labouring to medicate his soul from those springs of moral and spiritual health which are without him and above him—looking to that outward mercy which has been provided for his worthlessness, and praying for that refreshment and revelation by the Holy Ghost which are so richly provided for all who ask in faith.

We think that there must be many here present, who might be made to recognise, and we trust some who have actually proved in their own persons, the efficacy of this expedient—how the truths of the gospel can attemper the soul into a unison with its spirit—And more especially in that one truth which is the first that the apostle bids us keep

at all times in our memory, even that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures—how in this precious saying, when reckoned upon as faithful and regarded as worthy of all acceptation, there is a power to still and overawe the heart out of its rebellious tendencies—So that when a trusted Saviour is present to the thoughts, the sin of our nature is by a moral necessity disarmed of its practical ascendancy over us. We trust that with some who hear us, it has been found to hold experimentally—how a sense of the mercy of God in Christ annihilates the whole space of separation that there was between God and the soul, and so dissipates all its ungodliness—how walking before Him in the light and peace of conscious forgiveness, the spirit of bondage has fled away, and there have come in its place the love and the trust and the joy of reconciled children—how whenever he bethinks him of God having passed over the magnitude of his own provocations, he finds that achievement easy, which to nature is difficult, of maintaining the gentleness of his spirit under the sorest provocations of his fellow-men—how in dwelling on the agony of that endurance that was laid upon Christ for sinners, he too can learn to suffer and to grow in all those graces which are best taught in the school of tribulation—how it is when beholding the cross of our atonement, that he is most solemnized into a reverence for the sacredness of the Godhead, and is most awed into a fearfulness of the sin that was expiated there—Above all, when he looks onward to the glories of the inheritance which Christ hath purchased by His

blood, and the gates of which He has unbarred for the welcome access of the guiltiest of us all—how it is that the powers of the coming world win the mastery in his spirit, over the powers of the present one; that he sits loose to the vanities and the interests of a scene which passeth speedily away; and, now feeling eternity to be his destined home and the virtues of eternity to be his incumbent preparation, he holds a perpetual warfare with those passions that war against the soul, and bears on every footstep of his pilgrimage on earth the impress of that heaven for which he hopes and of that holiness to which he is aspiring.

We would conclude these preliminary remarks with three distinct observations.

And *first*, it is hoped that some of you may be led to perceive from them—how it is, that, by means of a power external to the mind of man yet brought from without to bear upon it, he may be so transformed as to become a new creature. If the eloquence of a Christian minister can for a time lift the soul, as it were, above itself—or if a pleasing and pathetic novelist can transport the imagination of his reader, and so assort his feelings to them as that, while the illusion lasts, he shall be refined and removed above the level of our ordinary world—or if poetry can bear him upward to a purer moral element, than he can breathe among his fellow-mortals—or, lastly, if music, that so charmed the spirit of the Hebrew king out of all its ferocity, is still found, so long as it plays upon the ear, to attune the heart to nobler and better feelings than those by which it is habitually occu-

pied—Shall we wonder, that, upon faith realizing the promises and the prospects of the gospel, the heart shall be translated into a new state, when thus visited as it were by the sense and the impression of its new circumstances? What music can be sweeter to the soul, than when peace is whispered to it from on high; or what lovelier vision can be offered to its contemplation, than that of heaven's Lord and of heaven's family; or what more fitted to lay the coarse and boisterous agitations of a present world, than the light which has pierced across the grave and revealed the peaceful world that is beyond it? Simply grant that the veil has been lifted from the eyes of guilty man; and that he now sees what he never wont to see—the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the remission of sins, and an open path to the bliss of eternity, and the glories of a purchased inheritance there, and here all the graces of our required preparation—let him see that these, which before stood at an impracticable distance, are now brought nigh unto him and have become all his own—Is it at all to be marvelled at—when the romance of music and eloquence and imagination and poetry, addrest to the heart of man, can so sublimate its affections for a period above all the passions and vulgarities of familiar life—with this fact of the human constitution so plainly before our eyes—are we to listen with incredulity, if told, that when the truths of Christianity burst forth upon the believer in all the magnificence of their lofty bearing and in all the might of their now apprehended reality, they so refine his every affection and so elevate the whole tone of his character, that all old things

are henceforth done away and all things become new?

Now, *secondly*, it is the office of God's Spirit thus to picture forth to the eye of the believer these truths of the gospel, in all the reality and power of application which belong to them. It is He who takes of the things of Christ; and, showing them unto the soul, causes the imagery of faith to overbear the impressions of sight. And the man who is thus acted upon, looketh beyond what is seen and temporal to what is unseen and eternal. It is from a source which is out of himself, that he fetches an influence which never fails to soothe and to sanctify the corrupt and distempered spirit; and, as it was the duty of Saul on the threatening of every dark visitation to require the music of that harp which he could at all times summon by the word of command into his presence, so it is the duty of every sinner in every time of need or of temptation, to invoke that Spirit, who never is withheld from the prayers of those who sincerely ask Him. When like to be assailed by the power of sin to an overthrow, this is the instrument of aid and of defence that will never fail you; and let the storms whether of the furious or of the wayward passions of our nature be what they may, this is the agent, at the bidding of whose still but omnipotent voice, an influence of peace and purity descendeth upon the heart, and it becometh a great calm.

But *lastly*, the way in which all this bears upon the passage before us, is by helping us to the determination of a controversy—whether the soliloquy whereof it consists, be that of Paul in his

own proper person, or of Paul in the person of an unconverted man? How, it may be thought, could this holy apostle take to himself, the blame of so much vileness and exceeding turpitude, as are made to characterise him who is supposed to utter this effusion? How could it be said of him who fought the good fight, that he was sold under sin; and that there dwelt no good thing in his flesh; and that there was a law in him, which would have led him in captivity to the law of sin and of death; and that, wretched under a mass of corruption from which he could not deliver himself, he had to cry out, under the extremity of anxious helplessness, lest it should have wholly overwhelmed him? Can all this be true of the man, in whom Christianity beheld the very noblest of her specimens; who ere he died could claim the victory as his own; and who, to obtain it, was throughout the whole of his discipleship the most unwearied in vigilance and the most strenuous in warfare?

Yes, there was a fight, and it turned out to be ultimately a successful one. But who were the parties in it? They were the grace of God on the one hand, and on the other the inherent corruption of man; and the very reason why Paul plied so laboriously and at length prevailed with the former, was because he felt such loathing and such self-abomination for the latter. This is a mystery of the Christian life which the world apprehendeth not; nor are they able to discern why the same individual should become every day more profound in humility, and yet more graceful in positive excellence—why he should be ever mourning more heavily than before under a sense of his worthless-

ness, and that at the very time when the real worth of his character is maturing and building up unto eternity. It is not understood, how the strugglings of the inner man bring every Christian who feels them into a more familiar acquaintance than before with the adverse elements in the conflict; and that as the spirit lusteth against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit, just in proportion to the felt preciousness of the one, is the felt burden and odiousness of the other. It is because he loáthes so much the earthliness of what is naturally ond originally his own, that he longs so much for the visitation of a heavenly influence from above. The sense of poverty is the very impulse that sends him to the fountain of abundance; and the detestation he feels of the sin that dwells in him, is the best guarantee that this sin shall not have the dominion over him. With these principles do we feel ourselves prepared for entering into more full elucidation of the passage before us; nor will you, I trust, be any more perplexed when you read of him who delighted in the law of God after the inward man, and who disallowed all that was evil, and who had the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him —how at the same time he mourned his vile body, and groaned being burdened under a sense of that sore moral leprosy by which it was pervaded. He had no confidence in himself; but he rejoiced in the Lord Jesus. He was in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; but when he was weak then was he strong—for when he spake of his infirmities, the power of Christ was made to rest upon him. "I will make my grace sufficient for thee. I will perfect my strength in thy weakness."

LECTURE XLII.

ROMANS, vii, 14, 15.

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

The first thing to be remarked here, is the transition which the apostle makes at this verse into another tense. It looks as if from the 7th verse to the 14th, he, using the past tense, was describing the state of matters antecedent to his conversion, and showing what his case was under the law; but that now, sliding into the use of the present tense, he is describing his experience as a believer: And this is one argument for Paul speaking here in his own person, and not in that of an unregenerate man.

'The law is spiritual.' It has authority over the desires of the inner man. It holds a sinful wish to be criminal, as well as a sinful performance. It finds matter for condemnation in the state of the will, as well as in the deeds of the outward history. It demands punishment, for example, not merely on the action by which I wrest another's property; but on the affection by which I covet it. Paul once thought himself free of all offences, in regard to a neighbour's rights, because he had never put forth the hand of violence, or plied any device of fraudulency against them. But when he looked to the spiritual nature of the commandment, in

that it interdicted him even from the longings of a secret appetite for that which was not rightfully his own—then, conscious that with all the abstinence of his outer man from the acts of dishonesty there was still a secret propensity in his heart towards the gains or the fruits, he felt himself, when standing at the bar of this purer and loftier jurisprudence, to be indeed a transgressor. And so, in the general, there may be no disobedience on the part of the outer man to any of God's commandments; and yet there may be, all the while, an utter distaste for them on the part of the inner man—and this is what the law takes cognizance of, in virtue of its spiritual character, and pronounces to be sinful. To do what is bidden with the hand, is not enough to satisfy such a law—if the struggling inclination of the heart be against it. And above all will it charge the deepest guilt on a man—because of his disaffection towards God—because of a love for the creature, that has deposed from its rightful ascendancy over him the love of the Creator—because of that moral anarchy and misrule in the constitution of his spirit, whereby, with its relish for the gifts of Providence, it has a disrelish and disregard for the Giver of them; and because while it may yield many compliances with the law of God at the impulse of dread or of danger or of habit, it yields not to God Himself the offering of a spontaneous devotion, the tribute of an intelligent or of a willing reverence.

Perhaps my best recommendation to you, for the purpose of acquiring a more thorough discernment of God's law in the spirituality of its charac-

ter, is that you peruse with faithful application to your own heart the fifth chapter of Matthew—where, article by article, you have the comparison between a spiritual and what may be called a carnal commandment; and from which you will at once perceive, how possible it is, that, with a most rigid and undeviating faithfulness in regard to the latter, there may be an utter deficiency from the former in all its requirements; and how truly the same individual may say of himself, that, when in the flesh, he, touching the righteousness that is of the law, was blameless—and yet, when advanced and elevated above this state and now in the spirit, he may say, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the law of sin in my members! You see how, in proportion to his high sense of the law, he may have a low sense of himself; and that, just as one advances in the discernment of its purity, and in the delicacy of his recoil at the slightest deviations therefrom, which surely mark his progressive sanctification—the more readily will he break forth into exclamations of shame and self-abhorrence: Or the loftier his positive ascent on the heights of sacredness, the more fearful will he be of all those drags and downward tendencies by which he still is encompassed; and which, if not felt to be most hazardous as well as most humbling, may not only cause to slip the footsteps of the heavenward traveller; but may precipitate him from the eminence that he has gotten, into the lowest depths of wretched and hopeless apostacy.

'I am carnal'—It is on the principles just now uttered, that Paul may have made this affirmation

of himself. The same man who could say of all the good that was done—"nevertheless not me but the grace of God that is in me"—Surely this man, who thus knew what he should refer to God's grace and what he should refer to his own separate and unaided self, might, even after this grace had become the habitual visitant or inmate of his heart, still look to his own soul; and, conceiving of it as apart or disjoined from the fountain out of which he draws the supplies of its nourishment, might well say that 'I am carnal.' Suppose for a moment that the branch of a tree were endowed with a separate consciousness of its own—then, however lovely in blossom or richly-laden with fruit, it may feel of the whole efflorescence which adorns it, that it was both derived and is upholden, by the flow of a succulence from the stem; and it may know, that, if severed therefrom, it would forthwith wither into decay, and that all the goodly honours wherewith it was invested would drop away from it. The twofold consciousness of what it would be in itself, and of what it is in the tree, might force the very utterance that was emitted by a Christian disciple when he said, "I am dead nevertheless I live." "Yet not I" adds the apostle "but Christ liveth in me." I apart from Him without whom I can do nothing—I disjoined from the Saviour who compares Himself to a tree and us to the branches—I who in Christ am a new creature—out of Christ am dead and out of Him am carnal.

The Scripture phrase "to be in the flesh" when descriptive of character is applied in sacred writ only to the unregenerate. "They who are

in the flesh cannot please God." "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." But the Scripture term carnal is sometimes applied to a man after his conversion. A man when newly born again is a babe; yet to such did Paul apply this epithet, "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" Only think of a Christian as made up of two ingredients, the one consisting of all that he inherits by nature, the other consisting of all that is superinduced on him by grace. Think of his inward and experimental life as consisting of a struggle between these ingredients, in which the one does habitually and will at length ultimately and completely prevail. But the wrong principle belonging properly and primitively to the man himself, and the right principle being derived from without through the channel of believing prayer, or the exercise of faith in Christ Jesus—how natural is it in these circumstances, for every Christian to regard the one as the home article, and the other as a foreign article for which he stands indebted to a fountain that is abroad—and whereunto it is his business to resort perpetually. He is like Saul operated upon by the harp of the son of Jesse; and as the one might well have said, even in the kindest and gentlest mood to which the warblings of the instrument had brought him, that in myself I am a firebrand of rage and vindictiveness—so the other, conscious that disjoined

from the grace and truth which come by Jesus Christ he is an ungodly and an unheavenly creature, might as well say that in myself I am an alienated rebel—in myself I am altogether carnal.

Let me separate by ever so little from Christ, then is this corrupt nature ever in readiness to put forth its propensities—Or even let me always abide in Him—let me in no one instance lose my hold of Him—conceive me to be placed on the very height of Christian perfection, and that just because I at all times am steadfastly and solidly established on the deepest basis of Christian dependence—Yet still with the assurance in my mind, that, should I let the dependence go, self would recover the ascendancy and that the ascendancy of self would be the ascendancy of sin, it is not too strong an inference that self is carnal; or even that self is sold under sin, as being, apart from the Saviour, its helpless and irrecoverable slave. It is said of Ahab that there was none like unto him; for he did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord. In him you have a character, where corruption was the dominant and the entire and the unresisted principle of his constitution. He was the old man all over—who loved his state of captivity, instead of lamenting it; and of whom it never could be said, that he felt the sin of his nature to be a burden, or that he longed to be delivered from it, or that he delighted in the law of God after the inner man, and sighed after the subjugation or rather the extirpation of every tumultuous and adverse element of evil that was in his outer man. His mind went wholly along with the wicked and wayward inclin-

ations that nature had given him; and here lay the difference between him and Paul, that, with the latter, there was gotten up a new creature all whose energies and desires were in a state of warfare with those of the old man; and in this passage we have the cries and the agonies of the battle, till it closes with the final shout of victory "I thank God through Jesus my Lord." Still, viewing the old man as properly his own, and the new creature as a present or a production from above—well might the apostle say, not in the character of what he was by derivation from the Lord his sanctifier, but in the character of what he originally and essentially was in himself, that I am carnal and I am sold under sin.

Ver. 15. To understand this verse, and to see that it is the utterance not of a wilful sinner but of an honest and aspiring disciple—remember that it is the soliloquy of one, who had just recognised the spiritual character of the law of God, and who was exercising and judging and confessing himself according to the standard of that law. There is at least one moral property, that must, in the midst of all his recorded deficiences, be ascribed to him. He willed the conformity of himself to God's holy commandment. The prescription that lies upon him and upon all is "be ye perfect;" and if perfection was not his achievement, it was at least his aim. His prevailing wish was to be altogether as he ought; and if he did not succeed in being so—he at least aspired at being so. The habitual longing of his heart was, without reserve and without hypocrisy, towards the law of God. There was a

pure and a lofty ambition which actuated his soul; and the object of that ambition was that he might serve God without a flaw, and reach an unspotted holiness. He may have been thwarted in the ambition—he may have been so crossed and impeded in his movements as to have come greatly short of it—yet still the ambition did exist, and evinced at once its strength and its perpetuity, both by the bitterness wherewith he mourned over his own failures, and by the fresh and repeated efforts wherewith he laboured to redeem them. In a word there was one principle of this man's constitution, that was all active and awake on the side of holiness—that bore a genuine love to virtue, and made constant efforts to realize it—that could not rest while its own protrait was one of unfinished excellence; and just like the accomplished artist, in proportion to his nice and delicate sense of beauty, were his grief and his intolerance at the blemishes wherewith his performance was stained. It is he who sets before him the loftiest standard of worth, and who is most jealous and unremitting in the pains that he takes to equalise it—it is he who most droops and is dejected under a sense of his deficiency therefrom. It is from him that we may look for most frequent humblings of spirit, and for the deepest visitations upon his heart of a sense of sin and of shortcoming; and that, not because he is beneath other men in his powers of execution, but because he is beyond them in his powers of conception, and in the largeness of his desires after the supremacy of all grace and all goodness.

That the soliloquist of the passage had this gen-

erous and aspiring tendency is evident. If faults he had, he had no toleration for them; but rather the fellest antipathy—'that which I do I allow not,—what I hate that do I.' If he fell short of moral and spiritual greatness, still he honestly aspired and habitually pressed towards it. 'What I would that I do not,' and "to will is present with me," and "I would do good," and that good is the law which has the consent of my approbation, and "in this law I delight after the inward man"—so that "with my mind I serve it." Now could you apply any one of these affirmations to such a man as Ahab? If they hold true of one character and do not hold true of another, is there not the utmost of a real and practical difference between the characters? Could Ahab have said that it is no more I who do it but sin that dwelleth in me? Does it not impress you with a most wide and palpable distinction, when you see one man solacing himself in full complacency with a sinful indulgence, and another man struggling with all his might against the sinful tendency which leads to it? The former comes willingly under the power of sin in his constitution—the other detests and mourns over the presence of it there. They are alike in both of them having a corrupt nature. They are unlike in that one has been furnished with a new and holy nature, which does not immediately extinguish the former, but takes place beside it until death, and bears a principle of unsparing and unquenchable hostility towards it. A man conscious to himself of this state of composition, takes the side of his new nature, and can say of

the rebellious movements of the old man, "it is not I who do them but sin that dwelleth in me." Ahab could not have said so, but Paul could. In the former, sin and self were on terms of perfect agreement—so that his heart was fully set in him to do that which was evil. In the latter, the original self was set aside, and kept under, and loathed because of its abominations, and striven against as the worst of enemies, and loaded with epithets of abuse, and charged with the designs and the dispositions of perpetual mischief. And so, throughout the whole of this soliloquy, is it reproached with being carnal and sold under sin, with doing that which is unallowable and undesirable and evil and hateful—with omitting to do what is good, and being without the skill and the power to perform it —with being utterly destitute of any good thing—with keeping up its execrated residence, even in the bosom of the Christian who loathed it; and, ever present there, warring against the suggestions of a better principle; and bent on taking captive the whole man to the law of that sin which was in his members—So as that the flesh was wholly enlisted on the side of this hateful service; and such a conflict upheld among the belligerent powers and principles that were in a believer's frame, as burdened him with a sense of wretchedness, and made him cry out for deliverance therefrom.

Take this along with you, and you will be able to appreciate what the confessions are that Paul makes of his own sinfulness. He first mourns over the guilt of his omissions, 'what I would that I do not'—'how to perform that which is good I

find not'—'the good that I would I do not.' Ere you estimate the flagrancy of his omissions, think of this, that they consist in having fallen short of his desires—not that his work fell short of that of other men, but that it fell greatly short of his own willingness—not that he neglected any one duty which could obtain for him credit in society, but that he failed in bringing his graces and his exercises up to the balance of the sanctuary. That he should in any one instance through the day, have lost the frame of his affectionate dependence towards God, or have let a sense of his obligations to Christ depart from his mind, or have slackened his diligence in the way of labouring for the souls of his fellow-creatures, or have cooled in his charity towards those who were around him, or have failed in any acts and expressions of courteousness—these were enough most tenderly to affect such a heart of moral tenderness as he had, and to prompt every confession and every utterance of shame or humiliation or remorse that is here recorded. What some might mistake as the evidence of a spiritual decline on the part of the apostle, was in fact the evidence of his growth. It is the effusion of a more quick and cultured sensibility than fell to the lot of ordinary men; and like the mortification of him, who, because the most consummate of all artists, is therefore the most feelingly alive to every deformity and every deviation. The inference were altogether erroneous, that because Paul went beyond other men in his confessions, he therefore went beyond them in his crimes. The point in which he went beyond them was, not in crime,

but in conscience, and the conclusion is—not that he who uttered these things was a reprobate, against whom the world could allege some monstrous or unnatural defect from any of the social or relative properties of life—but that, on the other hand, he was a busy and earnest and progressive disciple of the Lord Jesus, urged on by a sense of his distance from the perfection that lay before him, and charging his own heart with a wide and woful defect from the sanctities that it felt to be due to his God.

And the same holds true in regard to his confessions of positive sinfulness. 'What I hate that I do.' 'I do that which I would not.' 'The evil which I would not that I do'—Not that any doings of his were such as would be hateful to him of an ordinary conscience, not that the world could detect in them a flaw of odiousness. It was at the tribunal of his own conscience, that they were deemed to be reprehensible. It was in the eye of one now enlightened in the law of God and made alive to it, that the sins of his own heart bore upon them an aspect of such exceeding sinfulness. It was because of that quicker sensibility that he now had, as he moved forward in his spiritual education, that he now felt more of tenderness and alarm, about the secret workings of pride and selfishness and anger and carnality in his inner man; and such an effusion as that before us, which has been so strangely ascribed to a personified outcast from all grace and from all godliness, is one that only could have proceeded from the mouth of an experienced Christian, and is the best evidence of his

progress. No unchristianised man could have felt that delight in God's law, and that love for its precepts, and that active zeal on the side of obedience, which are all profest in the soliloquy that is now under consideration; and they would ensure, as they do with every Christian, a real and habitual progress in the virtues and accomplishments of the new creature. But just in proportion as the desire after spiritual excellence is nourished into greater force and intensity in the one department of his now complex nature—so must be the detestation that is felt for every degree or remainder of evil, that exists in the other department of it. And not till the union of the two is terminated by death—not till that tabernacle is broken up, which festers throughout with the moral virus, that entered at the sin of our first parent, and was transmitted to all his posterity—not till these bodies have mouldered in the grave, and are raised anew in incorruption and in honour—not till then shall the desire and the doing, the principle and the performance be fully adequate the one unto the other; and then, emancipated from the drag and the oppression that here encumber us, we shall be translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

LECTURE XLIII.

ROMANS, vii, 16, 17.

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

It might save a world of illustration in the business of interpreting this passage, were we sure of addressing ourselves to the experience of all our hearers. But we fear of some of you, that you have no internal conflict in the work of your sanctification at all—that you are under the dominion of but one ruler, even of self, that ever lends a willing ear, and yields a ready obedience to its own humours and appetites and interests; and that, living just as you list, you feel no struggle between your principles and your propensities—even because you live without God in the world. And furthermore we fear of others of you, that you have taken up your rest among the forms of an external religion, or among the terms of an inert orthodoxy, which play around the ear, without having reached a practical impulse to the heart; and which lead you to solace yourselves with the privileges of an imaginary belief, instead of landing you in the prosecution of a real and ever-doing business—which is to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect your holiness in the fear of God. It is only the man who has embarked upon this work in good earnest—

it is only he whose conscience will thoroughly respond to the narrative which the apostle here gives, of the broils and the tumults that take place among the adverse powers which are in the bosom of every true Christian. For Christian though he be, he is not yet a just man made perfect; but a just man fighting his way onward unto perfection, through the downward tendencies of a corruption that is present with him, and cleaves to him even till death shall set him free. And again, a fallen and depraved mortal though he be, he is not now of the wholly carnal and corrupt nature that he once was; but a spirit has been infused into him, wherewith to make head against his rebellious affections which still continue to solicit, though not permitted to seduce him, to that degrading slavery, against which he has now entered into a war of resistance, that will at length conduct him to freedom and to victory. The passage now before us is taken up with the history of this war. It is a narrative of that battle which arises from the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh —a process of unintelligible mystery, we doubt not, to those who have not personally shared in it; but coming intimately home to the experience of those, who have learned to strive and to run and to endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Yet, as we have said before, it were well if by any means we could give a plausible though distant conception to those who are without, of a matter wherewith every established and well-exercised Christian is quite familiar. It looks, I have no doubt, an apparent puzzle to the understandings

of many, that a man should do what is wrong while he wills what is right; and, more especially, that he all the while should be honestly grieving because of the one, and as honestly aspiring and pressing forwards, nay making real practical advances, in the direction of the other. And yet you can surely figure to yourself the artist, who, whether in painting or in poetry or in music, labours, yet labours in vain, to do full justice to that model of high excellence which his imagination dwells upon. He does not the things that he would, and he does the things that he would not. There is a lofty standard to which he is constantly aspiring and even constantly approximating—yet along the whole of this path of genius, there is a perpetual sense of failure; and a humbling comparison of what has been already attained with what is yet seen in the distance before it; and a vivid acknowledgment of the great deficiency that there is between the execution of the hand, and those unreached creations of the fancy that are still floating in the head: And thus an agony and a disappointment and a self-reproval, because of indolence and carelessness and aversion to the fatigues of watchful and intense study—all mixed up you will observe with a towering ambition, nay with a rapid and successful march along this walk of scholarship. How often may it be said of him that he does the things which he would not, when one slovenly line or one careless touch of the pencil has escaped from him; and when he falls short of those pains and that sustained labour, by which he hopes to rear a work for immortality. Yet is he making

steady and sensible advances all the while. This lofty esteem of all that is great and gigantic in art, is the very step in his mind to a lowly estimation of all that he has yet done for it; and both these together are the urgent forces, by which he is carried upwards to a station among the men of renown and admirable genius who have gone before him. Now what is true of the scholarship of art, is just as true of the scholarship of religion. There is a model of unattained perfection in the eye of its faithful devotees, even the pure and right and absolutely beautiful and holy law of God; and this they constantly labour to realize in their lives, and so to build up, each in his own person, a befitting inhabitant for the realms of eternity. But while they love this law, they are loaded with a weight of indolence and carnality and earthly affections, which cumber their ascent thitherward; and just in proportion to the delight which they take in the contemplation of its heaven-born excellence, are the despondency and the shame wherewith they regard their own mean and meagre imitations of it. Yet who does not see, that, out of the believer's will pitching so high, and the believer's work lagging so miserably after it, there cometh that very activity which guides and guarantees his progress towards Zion—that therefore it is, that he is led to ply with greater diligence the armour which at length wins him the victory—that the babe in Christ is cradled, as it were, in the agitation of these warring elements—that his spiritual ambition is just the more whetted and fostered into strength, by the obstacles through which it has to

fight its way—and rising from every fall with a fresh onset of help from the sanctuary, does he proceed from step to step, till he have finished the faith, till he have reached the prize of his high calling.

Paul, ere he was a Christian, was blameless in the whole righteousness of the law—so far as he then knew or then understood of its requirements. His conduct was up to the level of his conscience; and what he did was adequate to the sense that was in him of what he ought to do. But on his becoming a Christian, he got a spiritual insight of the holy law of God, and then began the warfare of the text—for then it was that his conscience outran his conduct; and that he could not overtake by his doings, what his now enlightened morality told him were his duties. There was nothing in this change actually to degrade the life and character of Paul; but there was much in it to degrade them in his own eyes. He formerly walked on what he felt to be an even platform of righteousness; but now the platform was as if lifted above him, and he was left to toil his upward way on a steep ascent that had been raised for conducting him thereto. Then all he did was as he would; and the work and the will were on terms of even fellowship with each other. But what he now did was as he would not; for he was aiming and stretching toward a height that he had not gained, and till he arrived at which he could not be satisfied. The view that he had now gotten of the law did not make him shorter of it than before; but it made him feel that he was shorter.

He was still the same blameless and respectable man of society that he had ever been; nor do we think that even in his days of darkness, any deed of intemperance or profligacy or fraud could at all be imputed to him. The confessions which are recorded here, are not those of a degraded criminal; but those of a struggling and heavenly-minded Christian, who was now forcing his way among the sins and the sanctities of the inner man, and, far above the level of our ordinary world, was soaring amid the spiritual alternations of cloud and of sunshine up to the heights of angelic sacredness.

Figure then a man to be under the aspirings of such a will on the one hand, but these often deadened and brought down by the weight of a perverse constitutional bias upon the other; and there are a thousand ways in which he is exposed to the doing of that which he would not. Should he wander in prayer—should the crosses of this world ever cast him down from the buoyancy of his confidence in God—should he, on being overtaken with a fault, detect upon his spirit a keener edge of sensibility to the disgrace that he had incurred among his fellows upon earth, than to the rebuke that he has brought upon himself from the Lawgiver in heaven—should the provocations of dishonesty, or the hostile devices of malicious and successful cunning, or the unexpected evolutions of ingratitude, or even the teasing and troublesome annoyances of interruption—should any of these temptations, wherewith society is constantly exercising its own members, ever transport him away from meekness and patience and charity and un-

wearied kindness—Then on that high walk of principle upon which he is labouring to uphold himself, will he have to mourn that he doeth the things which he would not; and ever as he proceeds, will he still find that there are conquests and achievements of greater difficulty in reserve for him. It argues a very exalted Christianity, when the glory of God is the habitual and paramount impulse, that gives movement to the footsteps of our history in the world. But, think you, that, when a man's heart comes to be visited by this ambition, that then it is he makes his escape from the complaint of doing what he would not? It only thickens the contest, and multiplies the chances of mortification, and furnishes new topics of humility to the disciple—and in the very proportion too that he urges and ascends and strikes loftier aims along the course of his progressive holiness. And so it follows, that he who is highest in acquirement is sure to be deepest in lowly and contrite tenderness—for just as the desires of his spirit mount higher, will the damp and the deadness and the obstructions of the flesh be more felt as a grief and an encumbrance to him. So that while in the body, this soliloquy of the apostle will be all his own; and so far from conceiving of it as the appropriate utterance for a natural and unconverted man—it is just as we are the more saintly, that we shall feel our readiness to coalesce with it as the fittest vehicle of hearts smitten with the love of purest excellence, yet burdened under a sense of distance and deficiency therefrom. And thus it is, that the toil-worn veteran has been known to weep upon his death-bed; and to long

for an escape from this sore conflict, between the elements of his compound nature; and to be in exceeding weariness for his emancipation from that vile body, which brings a soil and a taint and a tarnish upon all his offerings; and to feel how greatly better it were that he should be with Christ, and expatiate at large among those unclouded eminencies where the spirits of the perfect dwell, and are admitted among the glories of that unspotted holiness which now is inaccessible. For here, the accursed nature is still present, and galling with its offensive solicitations the regenerated spirit—so that when, weighed down by indolence; or frozen into apathy; or betrayed into uncharitable thoughts and uncharitable wishes; or led to seek the desires of its own selfishness more than God's honour, to rejoice in its exemption from punishment more than to aspire after its exemption from sin, to be more vehement for the object of being safe than for the object of being sanctified—The consciousness of these, which give no disturbance either to the unchristian man or to the Christian in his infancy, is still in reserve to humble and keep down even the most accomplished believer; to assure him still of the many things that he does which he would not; to keep him at the post of dependence, where he may join with the apostle in mourning over his own wretchedness, and with the psalmist in exclaiming "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults: Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

In the case of an unconverted man, the flesh is weak and the spirit is *not* willing; and so there is no conflict—nothing that can force those outcries of shame and remorse and bitter lamentation, that we have in the passage before us. With a Christian, the flesh is weak too but the spirit is willing; and under its influence there must, from the necessary connection that there is between the human faculties—there must, from the desires of his heart be such a plenteous efflux of doings upon his history, as shall make his life distinguishable in the world, and most distinguishable on the day of judgment, from the life of an unbeliever. But still his desires will outstrip his doings, and the will that he conceives shoot greatly ahead of the work that he performs; and thus, will he not only leave undone much of what he would, but, even in the language of our present verse, do many things that he would not. But I call you particularly to notice that the will must be there—that he is not regerated at all unless the will, honestly and genuinely and without the hypocrisy of all mental reservation, be there. If he have any interest in Christ, any part in the promises or the influences of His new economy, the inclination which prompts to a resolute and unsparing warfare with all iniquity must be there. The man who uses the degeneracy of his nature as a plea for sinful indulgence—the man who makes a cloak of his corruption wherewith to shelter its deceits and its deformities, instead of hating the spotted garment with his utmost soul and labouring to unwind himself from all its entanglements—the man who loves the play of orthodoxy

in his head, and stickles for his own depravity as the most favourite of its articles, while he continues to cherish it in his heart or to roll it under his tongue as a sweet morsel—That man is going to the grave with a lie in his right hand; and the piercing eye of his Judge, who now discerns his latent worthlessness, will at length drag it forth to open day, and expose it to shame and to everlasting contempt. That the will be on the side of virtue is indispensable to Christian uprightness. Wanting this, you want the primary and essential element of regeneration—You are not born again—you shall not enter the kingdom of God.

God knows how to distinguish the man of Christian uprightness, even amid all his imperfections, from another, who, not very visibly dissimilar in outward history, is nevertheless destitute of an honest, habitual, and heart-felt desirousness after the doing of His will. Let me suppose two yoked and harnessed vehicles, both upon a road of ruggedness and difficulty, and where at last each was brought to a dead stand. They are alike in the one palpable circumstance of making no progress; and, were this the only ground upon which a judgment could be formed, it might be concluded of the drivers that they were alike remiss, or of the animals under them that they were alike spiritless and indolent. And yet on a narrower comparison of the two, it may be observed from the loose traces of the one, that all exertion had been given up—while with the other there was the full tension of a resolute and sustained energy, pressing at the instant against the obstructions of the road, and perhaps with the

perseverance of a few minutes carrying it over them. Both, for the time being, are stationary; and yet the one is as distinct as possible from the other, in respect of the push and the struggle to get forward, and the forth-putting of strenuous inclination on the part of all the living agents who are concerned. And so, my brethren, of the Christian course. It is not altogether by the sensible motion, nor yet altogether by the place of advancement at which you have arrived, that you are to estimate the genuineness of the Christian character. Man may not see all the springs and traces of this moral mechanism, but God sees them; and he knows whether all is slack and careless within you, or whether there be the full stretch of a single and honest determination on the side of obedience. Think not that He is in want of materials for judging and deciding upon this question. Think not that He, of whom it is said that He weigheth the spirits of all those whose ways are clean in their own eyes, and that He pondereth the hearts as well as the goings of His creatures, and that from His throne in heaven His eyes behold and His eyelids try the children of men—think not that He will lose His discernment of the inward principle, amid all the drags and corruptions and obstacles wherewith a believer is encompassed upon his path. He knoweth how to separate the chaff from the wheat, and how to set His appropriate mark on the upright and on the hypocrite. You know in what direction you should move, even towards that which is good and away from that which is evil. God knows if you are intently and sincerely prosecuting

this career; for under all the mistiness of the human understanding, nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are his—And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

And so, amid all the besetting infirmities of a nature tainted with evil, which Paul had as well as others, he had what unconverted sinners have not, a desire and a conatus after all holy obedience. He consented unto the law that it was good, not assented but consented—did not simply approve of the things that are more excellent as the Jews with whom he reasoned, but had a liking to the things that are more excellent. His will was on the side of the law that he loved; and not on the side of that transgression which he hated, at the very time perhaps that he had been surprised into it. He consented unto the law that it was good, and his delight was in the law after the inward man, and with his mind he served the law of God. And God has a judging and a discerning eye upon all these tendencies. He knows most clearly the difference between him who has them, and him who has them not. There is a real and substantial distinction between the two characters, which is quite palpable to our heavenly Judge, and will guide Him to an unerring decision on the day of reckoning. If not so palpable to yourselves, it should just make you the more earnest in labouring to work out your assurance; and to watch against the deceitful and unknown hypocrisy, that may be lurking under the plausibilities of an orthodox profession; and to be altogether on the alert and on the alarm against

all those treacherous inclinations, that, if not rooted out, must at least be most vigilantly guarded, and on every appearance which they do put forth must be vigorously overborne. The adherence of the mind must be to the law of God. The affectionate consent of the heart must be towards it. All the feelings and faculties of the inward man must be on the side of obedience; and if such be indeed our spiritual mechanism, we shall be impelled forward, through the many impediments of a perverse and wofully deranged nature, on the path of new obedience —rising, as the upright ever do, from the falls which they experience; and urging our laborious and oft-interrupted way to that land, where the soul that has holy desires shall meet with a body that has been delivered of its moral leprosy, we shall pass from strength to strength till we appear perfect before God in Zion.

Ver. 17. There is a peculiarity here that is worth adverting to. St. Paul, throughout the whole of this passage, utters the consciousness that is in him, of the two opposite principles which resided and which rivalled, the one with the other, for dominion over his now compound because now regenerated nature. And it is remarkable how he sometimes identifies himself with the first of these ingredients, and sometimes with the second of them. In speaking of the movements of the flesh, he sometimes says that it is I who put forth these movements. "I am carnal and sold under sin." "I do that which I hate." "I do that which I would not." "In me—that is in my flesh," but still you will perceive so identifying for a time the

flesh with himself as to say of this flesh that it is me—" In me dwelleth no good thing." And lastly, " I do the evil that I would not" and " I find not how to perform that which is good."

Now here you will perceive, that, in all these quotations, he charges on his own proper and personal self, the corrupt feelings and instigations that the flesh gives rise to. And it is true that these all do emanate from the original part of his nature; and the other or the gracious part of it, came by a subsequent accession to him. It is a thing superinduced at conversion, and may be regarded more in the light of an element imported from abroad, which no doubt it was his part to cherish to the uttermost; but which still was a sort of foreigner in his constitution that did not primarily and essentially belong to it.

Yet notwithstanding this, I would have you to notice, how he shifts the application of the pronoun I; and transfers it from the corrupt to the spiritual ingredient of his nature. It is I who would do that which is good. It is I who hate that which is evil. It is I who consent unto the law; and finally it is I who delight in the law of God after the inner man. Thus it is, if I may so speak, that Paul interchanges himself between the two conflicting elements that were within him—at one time regarding the better of the two elements as a visitant from without whom he longed to detain, and charging upon his own person all the baseness and misery of its antagonist—at another bitterly complaining of the worse element as a burden wherefrom he longed to be delivered, and acta-

ally vindicating himself from its corrupt movements by expressly saying that it was not I. And, to fetch an example from another part of his writings, we hold it to be truly remarkable that, while in the passage before us he says of that which is evil in him 'it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me'—there is a different passage where he says of that which is good in him "nevertheless not me, but the grace God that is in me."

We thus bring together these affirmations of the apostle, hoping that it may have the effect of making more manifest to you—that state of composition in which every Christian is, who hath been visited with spiritual life from on high, and yet is compassed about with the infirmities of an earthly tabernacle. In virtue of the original ingredient of this composition, he does well to be humbled under a sense of his own innate and inherent worthlessness. And yet it is true, that in virtue of the second or posterior ingredient—his taste, and his understanding, and his deliberate choice, and the higher powers and faculties of his moral system, are now all on the side of new obedience. Nevertheless it is well for him to look often unto the rock whence he was hewn; and, thinking of the quarter whence he derives all his heaven-born virtues, to say of them that they had not their origin in me—and it is also well for him, while he regards the duties of the Christian life and the graces of the Christian character, to say that these are what *I* love to perform, and these are what *I* hope to realise.

And the apostle, at the end of this chapter, lays

before us the distinction between the two parts of the Christian nature—when he says, that with the mind I myself serve the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin. But ever remember, that it is the part of the former to keep the latter under the power of its presiding authority. The latter, on this side of death, is ever present with us; but for all that, it may not prevail over us. It may often be felt in its hateful instigations; but it must not on that account be followed in the waywardness of its devious and unlawful movements. Were there no counteracting force I would serve it; but, with that force in operation over me and because I am under grace, sin may have a dwelling-place but it shall not have the dominion.

When the matter is taken up as a matter of humiliation, then it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that it is I who am the sinner; that to myself, properly and primarily, belongeth all that is vile and worthless in my constitution; that, even at the very time I am brightening into the character of heaven, I am ever reminded by the conscience within me of an inherent depravity that is all my own; and, even though this corruption is fast dying towards its final and complete disappearance, yet that it is under the power of an influence that cometh all from another. He who can say that by the grace of God I am what I am, may in fact have reached a lofty eminence of that ascent which reacheth unto perfection; and yet with truth may think and feel, that, in himself, he is altogether void of godliness. The shame of his original nature still adheres to him; and, although it be

fast giving way to the ascendant power of another and a nobler nature, yet, knowing whence it is that he hath derived both its being and its growth, the graces and the ornaments of the spiritual life are but to him a matter of gratitude, and not at all of glorying.

On the other hand, when, instead of being taken up as a topic of humiliation it is taken up as a topic of aspiring earnestness, it cannot be too strongly urged on every Christian, that he should be able honestly and heartily to say of himself, I desire after holiness—in very sincerity and truth it is the fondest aim of my existence, to be what I ought and to do what I ought—for the furtherance of the same would I pray and watch and keep my unceasing post both of vigilance and exertion—I take the side of all that is good and gracious in my constitution; and against whatever still adheres to me of the unrenewed and the carnal, do I feel an utter and irreconcilable enmity. His mind is with the law of God; and though the tendencies of his flesh be with the law of sin, yet, sustained by aid from the sanctuary, does he both will and is enabled to strive against these tendencies and to overcome them.

It is under such a feeling of what he was in himself on the one hand, and such an earnestness to be released from the miseries of this his natural condition upon the other, that Paul cries out in the agonies of his internal conflict—"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" And I would have you to mark how instantaneous the transition is, from the cry

of distress to the gratitude of his felt and immediate deliverance—"I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." This we hold to be the exercise of every true Christian in the world. Evil is present with him; and he blames none but himself for its hateful and degrading instigations. But grace is in readiness, not to sweep away this evil as to its existence, but to subdue it as to its prevalency and power; and while he blames none but himself for all that is corrupt, he thanks none but God in Christ for all that is gracious and good in him. To use an old but expressive phrase, his soul is ever travelling between his own emptiness and Christ's fulness; and like the apostle before him when urged with any temptation, he recurs to the expedient of beseeching the Lord earnestly that it might depart from him. And the answer to this petition is remarkable. It does not appear that the temptation was made to depart from him; but it was deprived of its wonted force of ascendancy over him. It was not by the extirpation of the evil, but by the counteracting strength of an opposite good, that the apostle was kept upright as to his walk, in the midst of all the adverse and corrupt tendencies of his will. "I will make my grace sufficient for thee," was the Lord's answer to him. It was not that he did not still feel how in himself he was weak. The weakness of nature remained; but in that weakness I will perfect my strength, says the Saviour. And so it is we believe to the end of our days. There is a felt distinction between the weakness that is in ourselves, and the strength that cometh upon us from the upper sanc-

tuary. Even Paul was doomed to the consciousness that he had both a flesh and a mind—the one of which would have inclined him wholly to the love and to the law of sin; and with the other of which he kept the corrupt tendency that still abode with him in check, and so maintained a conduct agreeable to the law of God. Like him, my brethren, let us have no confidence in the flesh, and like him let us rejoice in the Lord Jesus; and so shall we be enabled to serve God in the Spirit—realising that comprehensive description which he gives of a Christian when he says, "We are of the circumcision, who serve God in the spirit, and rejoice in the Lord Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

LECTURE XLIV.

ROMANS, viii, 1.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The term 'now,' may be understood in two senses —one of them a more general, and the other a more special. It may be understood as it respects the present economy of the gospel. Now, since that economy has been instituted—now, since the first covenant has passed away, and the second has been substituted in its place—now, that Christ hath borne the vengeance of the law upon His own person, and, having thus disposed of its threatenings against the guilty, can now address the guilty with the overtures of a free pardon and a finished and entire reconciliation—Now is it competent for sinners to embrace these overtures; and there is now no condemnation to those, who, having so complied with them, are in Christ Jesus. It is thus that the term now may be made to respect the current period in the history of God's administration—the reign of grace under which we at present are, in contradistinction to the former regimen of the law which has been superseded.

Or it may be understood more specially, as referring to the present moment in the history of an individual believer. He is now freed from condemnation—not as if the sentence of acquittal were still in dependence, but as if that sentence had al-

ready passed—not as if he had to look, perhaps doubtfully and ambiguously, forward to some future day, when a verdict of exculpation shall be pronounced upon him; but as if he stood exculpated before God even now, and even now might rejoice in the forgiveness of all his trespasses.

We think that, in the clause before us, the term now reaches the full extent of this signification. When a sinner closes with Christ, God takes him on the instant into reconciliation; and from that time are his sins washed out in the blood of the Lamb. I will remember them no more. I will make no more mention of them; and they are among the things that are behind, and which ought to be forgotten. The believer should feel his conscience to be relieved from the guilt and from the dread of them; and, instead of being any longer burdened with them as so many debts subject to a count and reckoning on some future day, he has a most legitimate warrant for looking on the account as closed, and that there is a full settlement and discharge because of them between him and God. We have heard that it is wrong in a believer to live beneath his privileges, and we fully agree in so thinking. We know not how the spirit of bondage is ever to be done away, or the joy of the gospel ever made to spring up in the heart, if, still beset with the entanglement of his scruples and of his fears, he shall suspend the remission of his sins on any thing else than on the blood of Jesus. Now all that is told of that blood should assure him of a present justification; and this should send an instant peace into his bosom; and, like the

jailor of old, should he on hearing of the power and property thereof, forthwith and from that moment rejoice. Be translated then into the sense of God being at peace with you. Receive the forgiveness of your sins, through Him whom God hath set forth as a propitiation. Look unto Christ lifted up for the offences of the world; and be encouraged in the thought, that the whole weight of your offences has indeed been borne away from yourself, and indeed been laid upon another. It is on the strength of this simple exhibition, that I should like to assure you of pardon; nor would I embarrass the matter with any conditions, or hang it on any dark and uncertain futurities that may lie before you. Christ hath made atonement, and with it God is satisfied; and if so, well may you be satisfied—delighting yourselves greatly in the abundance of peace, and going forth even now in the light and the liberty of your present enlargement.

But the verse further proceeds to inform us, who they are that have this inestimable privilege; and the first circumstance of description which it brings forward respecting them, is, that they are in Christ. There are some, who actuated by the distaste of nature towards gospel truth in all its depth and all its peculiarity, understand this phrase in a way that is but vaguely and feebly expressive of its real meaning. They have no tolerance for the doctrine of a vital and mystical union between Christ as the head, and Christians as the members who receive from Him both their guidance and their nourishment; and they fear lest fanaticism should betray them into some of her illusions, by

carrying too far the analogy between a vine and its branches; and so they get over the phrase of being in Christ, and get quit of all that special intimacy of alliance with the Saviour which it is fitted to convey, by the very general interpretation that to be in Christ is just tantamount to being a Christian. And so it is, if you understand a Christian in the full sense and significancy of that high denomination. But then we must not shut our eyes against the closeness of that personal and substantial attachment, which we every where read of, as subsisting between the Redeemer and those who are the fruit of the travail of His own soul; nor are we jealously to exclude from our minds the impression of that very near relationship, which is suggested by the following passages—"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." "The dead in Christ shall rise first." "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." "He that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit." "And be found in him not having my own righteousness."

But lest we should wander into a region of mist and of obscurity, let us not forget, that, for the purpose of being admitted into this state of community with the Saviour, the one distinct and intelligible thing which you have to do is to believe in Him. There is nothing mystical in the act by which you award to Him the credit for His declarations; and this is the act by which your are grafted in the

Saviour. Whatever this matter of your union with Christ be, it all hinges upon your faith in Him —which faith is the great tie of relationship betwixt you. As you hold fast the beginning of your confidence and persevere therein, the tie will be strengthened—the relationship will become more intimate —the communications of mutual regard will become more frequent, and more familiar to your experience —every day you live might bring you into more intense acquaintanceship with the Saviour, and that on the strength of your faithful applications to Him, and of His sure and faithful responses unto you—And thus, by certain exercises and feelings which certainly are not recondite in themselves might you arrive at a state of fellowship with Christ; which fellowship, in the description of it, might be very recondite both to those who stand without, and even to those who have got no farther than to the threshold of Christian experience. By the simple expedients of believing prayer; and the habitual commitment of yourself to the Lord your Saviour, in circumstances of trial or difficulty; and the encouragement of your heart's regard and gratitude, because of all the favours that you have gotten at His hand; and the strenuous maintenance within you of that peace which He hath purchased by His blood, and of that purity by which His will is complied with and His doctrine is adorned—by these you may so overshoot the experience of other men, as to have attained a sense and a discernment of incorporation with the Saviour, wherewith they are not yet prepared to sympathise. All this, though not yet realized by many of you, is surely

conceivable by many of you; but meanwhile, and lest you should think of some remote and inaccessible mystery which it were utterly hopeless for you to aspire after, I would have you all to remark, that, though the territory of Christian experience may not be plain to you, yet the way is plain by which you arrive at it—that, more particularly, you are conducted to the state of being in Christ simply by believing in Him: And so, there ought to be nothing more unintelligible in the verse, that 'there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,' than in the verse, "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

But there is another circumstance of description that attaches to those unto whom there is no condemnation. This is the privilege of those who are in Christ Jesus; and further, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now here I must come forth with a special demand upon your attention. We are not fond of those less manageable topics in theology, that call either for an elaborate exposition on the part of the minister, or for a very strenuous and sustained effort of attention on the part of the hearers; and nothing else can reconcile us to them, than their practical bearing upon the comfort or the holiness of Christians. For it is at the same time most true, that a thing may at once be both profound and important. It may lie deep; and yet, like the precious metals, be of use in the familiar currency of the business of religion. The work of godliness

presses all the faculties into its service, and lays a tax on the understanding of man, as well as upon his heart and his conscience. Insomuch that we are bidden to give earnest heed, and to hearken diligently, and to search for sacred wisdom as for hidden treasure, and to meditate on these things, and to give ourselves wholly thereunto, and to study and strive and stir ourselves up that we may lay hold of them. And we do think that such passages as these, might mitigate somewhat the prejudice of many against the scholastic air of certain of our theological disquisitions—as leading us to suspect that perhaps in some instances, and more especially in the work of rightly dividing the word of truth, the thing is unavoidable.

You will therefore suffer me I trust, when I say, that, of the two circumstances in the description of those who are free from condemnation which are presented to our notice in the verse before us, one of them is the cause of our being so freed; and the other is not the cause but the consequence. Both of these invariably meet on the person of him, who hath been admitted to the pardon and acceptance of the gospel. Every one who is so admitted, is in Christ Jesus; and every one who is so admitted, walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit. But it is of real practical importance for you to be made aware, that one of these circumstances goes before your deliverance from guilt, and the other comes after it. Your release from condemnation is suspended on the first circumstance of your being in Christ Jesus. But it is not so suspended on the second circumstance, of

your walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit. The first is the origin of your justification—the second is the fruit of it. You secure your hold of the one, by keeping hold of Christ; and you make progress in the other, by walking securely before Him in the light of His friendly countenance, and with the willingness of a grateful and devoted heart that He has emancipated from all its fears. The order of succession which I now announce to you, will not interest those who take no interest in their souls. But it may resolve the difficulty of an anxious enquirer; and be the instrument to him, both of his translation into peace, and of his translation into progressive holiness.

For mark the embarrassment of that disciple, who, instead of entering upon forgiveness even now by a league of faith and fellowship with Christ; and so bringing his person under the first of these two circumstances,—postpones his enjoyment of this privilege until he has accomplished the second of them, and is satisfied with himself that he walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Look, I pray you, to the heavy disadvantage under which he toils and travails at the work of new obedience; and how the spirit of bondage is sure to be perpetuated within him, so long as he persists in his wrong imagination; and how still the conditions of an impracticable law must continue to oppress his conscience, and to goad him onward in a service, where he labours in the very fire and wearies himself for very vanity; and how working, as he in fact must do, for his justification before God, he cannot advance a single footstep without a despair-

ing eye on some new and unscaled heights of virtue, the very aspect of which takes all heart and all energy away from him. And thus, with the burden upon his inner man of all the fears and disquietudes which attach to the old legal economy, will he either spend his days in a grievous servitude which fatigues but never satisfies; or be driven from very weariness to a compromise between his conscience and his conduct, between the law of God and his own garbled conformity thereunto—bringing down the high requisitions of heaven to the corrupt standard of earth; and offering, in the sight of men and of angels, a polluted obedience as a rightful equivalent for the rewards and the honours of eternity. He must either do this, or be haunted and pursued to the end of life, by all the perplexities of a yet unsettled question between him and God; and the sense of his manifold deficiencies will never cease either to pain or to paralyse him; and still much of the drudgery of obedience may reluctantly be borne, but nought of the delight of obedience will be there—there may be the outward compliance of a slave, but none of the inward graces or aspirations of a saint. The truth is, that if this immunity from condemnation, instead of being a thing given to us because we are in Christ, is a thing purchased by us because of our walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit—then will conscience ever be suggesting to us that, the purchase has not been made good; and all the jealousies of a bargain will ever and anon rise up between the parties; and a cold or mercenary feeling will put to flight the good will,

and the confidence, and the spontaneous regard, which are the alone worthy ingredients of all acceptable godliness; and, after all the offerings that may have been rendered by the hand, the sterling tribute of the heart will be withholden. God will be feared, or He will be distrusted; but He cannot be loved under such an economy; so that, throughout the whole of this strenuous and sustained exertion after a righteousness which is by the law, the law is dishonoured at every breath in the first and greatest of her commandments.

There is a better way of ordering this matter; and it is a way laid down by Him, who is the wisdom of God unto salvation. The gospel carries in it a full and immediate tender of pardon unto sinners. Deliverance from condemnation is not the goal, but the starting-post of the Christian race; and, instead of labouring to make good the remote and inaccessible station where forgiveness shall be awarded to him, he is sent forth with the inspiration of one who knows himself forgiven on the way of all the commandments. All are invited to come unto Christ, and to be in Christ; and from that moment the believer's guilt is washed away; and a full deed of amnesty is put into his hand; and, lightened of all his fears, he goes forth upon his course rejoicing. The tenure of his discipleship, is, not that with him there is some future chance of pardon, but unto him that now there is no condemnation; and this, like the loosing of a bond, sets him free for all the services of new obedience. It opens an ingress to his heart for affections, which never else could have found company there;

and the creature knowing himself to be safe, and delivered from the engrossment of his before slavish apprehensions, can now with new-born liberty walk after the Spirit on the path of a progressive holiness. It is because he knows the truth that the truth has now made him free. It is not a regeneration originating with himself, that has reconciled him unto God—but it is a sense of his reconciliation, it is this which has regenerated him. His new walk is not the cause of his agreement with God. It is the consequence which has emanated therefrom.

It is the free grace of the gospel, which awakens every man who receives it, to the charm of a new moral existence. Faith is the quickening touch, whereby the before dormant energies of our nature are put into motion. It is faith which ushers love into the heart, and love gives impulse to the inert and sluggish mechanism of the human faculties. With the despairing sense in his bosom of a good wholly unattainable, the man feels himself weighed down to inaction and to apathy. But when the good is offered to him freely and he by faith lays hold of it—then, delivered at once from the cold and creeping spirit of bondage, does he break forth in the full vigour of his emancipated powers. What before was a matter of anxious uncertainty, and without either hope or affection to animate, becomes a matter of confidence and alacrity and good will. And this is the great secret of that promptitude and that power wherewith the gospel urges on its disciples to the cultivation of its heaven-born virtues, to the faithfulness and the activity of its bidden services.

Make the transition, my brethren, from death unto life, by simply laying hold on the gospel offer of reconciliation. After placing your full reliance upon this, then run with all your might on that heavenward path of righteousness and purity and love which leadeth unto the upper paradise. First trust in the Lord, and then be doing good. A workman to whom a tool is indispensable—you would never bid him work for the tool, but you would put the tool into his hand and bid him work by it. Faith is the alone spiritual tool, by which you can accomplish any right spiritual preparation. How can I love God—how can I maintain the gentleness of my spirit, under provocations the most artful and the most galling—how can I keep up the serenity of the inner man, while the voice of calumny is abroad; or a visible alienation sits upon every countenance; or plans misgive and prospects lowr and look dreary on every side of me; or, forsaken by all that is sweet and soothing in human companionship, I have nought to lean upon but God as the friend whom I have chosen and heaven as the home of my fondest expectations? The answer of the New Testament is—'Only believe—all things are possible to him that believeth.' This is the tool for all the high moral achievements of Christianity; and thus it is that your being now in Christ, with a present freeness from condemnation, forms an essential stepping-stone to your walking no more after the flesh but after the Spirit.

But—mark it well, my brethren. This distinction between the consequence and the cause, though it gives to the obedience of a believer its

proper place, does not make that obedience less sure. What the worldly or hypocritical professor thinks to be faith, is nought but fancy or something worse, if it be not followed by the walk of godliness. It is just as true as if your virtue were the price of your salvation—that there will be no salvation for you, if you have no virtue. There will be a personal distinction between those in the last day who stand on the right, and those who stand on the left of the judgment-seat; and the distinction will be, that, whereas the one abounded in good, so the other abounded in evil deeds done in their body. All that we have said was not with a view to supersede the moralities of practical righteousness, but to set you on the proper way by which to arrive at them. The ultimate design of the gospel economy is to make those who sit under it zealous of good works; and the reason why we should like the sense of your deliverance from guilt to be introduced even now by faith into your bosoms, is, that we esteem it the only instrument for reviving within you the love of God, or for causing to break forth upon your visible conduct the efflorescence of all that is virtuous and pure and praiseworthy.

To conclude my remarks upon this verse which has detained us so long, I would have you to be aware of this most important consideration—that the same believer who is represented here as walking not after the flesh, is the very individual who would take up the soliloquy of the last chapter; and have full share and full sympathy, with the toil, and the conflict, and all the inward bitterness

because of sin, that are represented therein. The same man who feels the motions of the flesh, walks not after the flesh. The same man who is harassed with the instigations of sin, resists and refuses to follow them. He who was burdened, even to a sense of wretchedness, with the hateful presence of his wayward and licentious desires, would not submit to their tyranny; and while kept in a state of constant vigilance and alarm because of the warring elements in his bosom, yet does he so fight as that the evil which is in his heart shall not have the mastery over his conduct—So that, amid the opposing tendencies and inclinations which beset his will, still his walk is the walk of new obedience—not being after the flesh but after the Spirit. "Every man is tempted," says the apostle James, "when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." The believer is often so tempted, and even to his own sad grief and humiliation may he have described the previous steps of this process; but never is the process so finished as to terminate in death. He struggles against sin, and he prevails over it. There may be a sore and a desperate contest in the inner man; but the result of it is a body kept under subjection, whose hands are made the instruments of righteousness, and whose feet are found in the way of all God's commandments. Take my brethren the patent and accessible way that lies so openly and so invitingly before you. Wash out your sins even now in the blood of God's everlasting covenant. Come and

taste of the sure mercies of David. Receive the forgiveness of your sins; and, when delivered from the weight and oppression of your guilt—that sore spiritual palsy, then arise and walk. Tidings of great joy should make you joyful; and the tidings wherewith I am fraught are of that remission from sin which I now preach unto you, and which may be preached to every creature under heaven. The effect it had on believers of old was an instantaneous joy; and so should be the effect on all now who believe the same gospel. And joy my brethren carries a vigour and an inspiration along with it. There is a might of practical energy in the impulse which it communicates; and it is when the heart is enlarged thereby, that the feet run with alacrity in the way of all the commandments.

LECTURE XLV.

ROMANS, viii. 2.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

It is of great importance for the understanding of this verse, that you be made acquainted with the two different senses that belong to the word law. At one time it signifies an authoritative code, framed by a master for the regulation and obedience of those who are subject to him. And so we understand it when we speak of the law of God, whether by this we mean His universal moral law or any system of local and temporary enactments—such as those which were embodied for the special government of the Jews, and have obtained the general denomination of the Mosaic law or the ceremonial law. According to this meaning of it, it stands related to jurisprudence—established by one party who have the right or the power of command, and submitted to by another party on whom lies the duty or the necessity of obedience. The laws of the Medes and Persians—the laws of any country—and, in a word, any rule put forth by authority and enforced by sanctions, whether it has issued from the Divine Governor, or from those who have the reins of civil or political authority upon earth—All are expressed by the same term and in the same sense of the term. But there is still another and very frequent meaning of this word,

apart altogether from jurisprudence—a meaning applicable in cases where there is no obedience of living and accountable creatures at all; and a meaning in which it might be used and understood even by the Atheist, who denied the being or the power of a living Sovereign who presided over nature, and established the various successions that go on with such order and regularity around us. It is quite consistent with the use of language, to speak of the laws of nature—denoting thereby the process by which events follow each other, in a train of certain and unvarying accompaniment—Such for example as the law of falling bodies—the law of reflection from polished surfaces—the laws of the vegetable kingdom; and even in this sense may we speak of the laws of the human mind, as altogether distinct from that law of God to which it is morally and rightfully subject in the way of jurisprudence. By one of these laws its thoughts follow each other in a certain order that might almost be predicted—so that if one thought be present to it, it is sure to suggest another thought; and this is called the law of association. And so in proportion as we make an intimate study of ourselves, shall we find certain methods of procedure, in the order of which the feelings and the faculties and the habits of man are found to go forward; and all these may be announced by metaphysicians and moralists as the laws of human nature. The law which willing and accountable creatures are bound to obey is one thing. The law, in virtue of which creatures whether animate or inanimate are found at all times to make the same exhibition in the same circumstances, is another.

At the same time it is not difficult to perceive, how one and the same term came to be applied to things so distinct in themselves. For you will observe that law, according to the first sense of it, is not applicable to a single command that may have issued from me at one time, and perhaps may never be repeated. It is true that this one commandment, like all the others, is obeyed, because of that general law by which the servant is bound to fulfil the will of his master. Yet you would not say of the special commandment itself that it was a law; nor does it attain the rank of such a denomination, unless the thing enjoined by it be a habit or a practice of invariable observation. Thus the order that the door of each apartment shall be shut in the act of leaving it—or that none of the family shall be missing after a particular hour in the evening—or that Sabbath shall be spent by all the domestics either in church or in the exercises of household piety—These may be characterised as the laws of the family—not the random and fortuitous orders of the current day, but orders of standing force and obligation for all the days of the year; and in virtue of which you may be sure to find the same uniform conduct on the part of those who are subject to the law, in the same certain circumstances that the law hath specified.

Now it is this common circumstance of uniformity, which hath so extended the application of the term law, as to present it to us in the second verse which I have endeavoured to explain. Should you drop a piece of heavy matter from your hand, nothing more certain nor more constant than the descent

which it will make to the ground—just as if constrained so to do by the authority of a universal enactment on the subject, and hence the law of gravitation. Or if space be allowed for its downward movement, nothing more certain or uniform than the way in which it quickens its descent—just as if bidden to make greater speed, and hence the law of acceleration in falling bodies. Or if light be made to fall by a certain path on a smooth and polished surface, nothing more mathematically sure than the path by which it will be given back again to the eye of him who looks to the image that has thus been formed, and hence in optics the law of reflection. Or if a substance float upon the water, nothing more rigidly and invariably accurate than that the quantity of fluid displaced is equal in weight to that of the body which is supported; and all this from a law in hydrostatics. Now there is a like constancy running throughout the whole of nature, and any of her uniform processes is referred to the operation of a law—just as if she sat with the authority of a mistress over her mute and unconscious subjects, and as if they by the regularity of their movements did willing and reverential homage to the authority of her regulations. But you will perceive wherein it is that the difference lies. The one kind of law is framed by a living master for the obedience of living subjects, and may be called juridical law. The other is framed by a living master also, for amid the diversity of operations it is God who worketh all in all; but it is not by a compliance of the will that an obedience is rendered thereunto—it is by the force of those natural principles where-

with the things in question are endowed, and in virtue of which they move and act and operate in that one way which is agreeable to their nature. This kind of law would by philosophers be called physical law. The one is a perceptive rule for the government of willing and accountable creatures. The other is an operative principle residing in every creature, be it animate or be it inanimate; and determining it by its own force to certain uniform processes.

Now the question comes to be, in which of these two senses shall we understand this term law in the text before us. We think that though it occurs twice, both of these must be understood in the same sense; and both indeed appear to be determined to the same sense by the relation in which they stand as rivals or as opposites. When the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and of death, it is either by the authority of one master prevailing over the authority of another master; or by the force of one influencing principle within us prevailing over the force of another such principle. To determine which of these two it is, we shall begin with the consideration of the law of sin and death, which though it comes last in the verse, is first in the order of ascendancy over the human mind; and from the nature of the thraldom under which it brings us, may lead us to think aright of the nature of our deliverance therefrom.

It must be quite obvious then to you all, that the law of sin and death is not a law that is enacted in the way of jurisprudence; but, like every other

law of nature, it is an operative principle that worketh certain effects and emanates certain processes in the subject where it resides. It is neither more nor less in fact than the sinful tendency of our constitution; and is quite the same with what in the preceding chapter is termed the law of sin that is in our members. It is called a law, because, like the laws of gravitation or magnetism or electricity, it impels those upon whom it acts in a certain given direction; and has indeed the power and the property of a moving force expressly ascribed to it, when it is said to war against the law of the mind, and to be incessantly aiming after the establishment of its own mastery over those whom it tries to lead captive and to enslave. And to keep up this conception of a law in the second sense of it, let it be remembered that death is as much the natural consequence of sin, as it is the penalty of sin—that it forms the termination of an historical process by a law that regulates the succession of events, as well as the termination of a juridical process under the power and authority of a lawgiver—that regarded in its true character as the extinction of the life of godliness in the soul; as the death of all spiritual joy; as the darkness and the misery of a heart, where vice and selfishness and carnality are the alone occupiers; as that moral hell, the rudiments of which every unconverted man carries about with him here, and the settled maturity of which he will bear with him to the place of condemnation hereafter; as that state of distance and disruption from God, which may now be supportable so long as earth spreads its interests and gratifi-

cations before us, but which so soon as earth passeth away will leave the soul in desolation and terror and without a satisfying portion throughout eternity —Such a death as this, comes as regularly and as surely in the train of our captivity to sin, and by the operation of a law, in the moral or spiritual department of nature—as the fruit of any tree, or the produce of any husbandry, does by the laws of the vegetable kingdom. The sinful tendency that worketh in man bringeth forth fruit unto death; just as the vegetative tendency that is in the foxglove bringeth forth poison. In both it is a fruit of bitterness; and in both the effect of an established law,—apart from the awards and the retributions of a lawgiver.

Now the way in which this tendency is counteracted, is just by an opposite tendency that is implanted in the mind, for the purpose of making head against it, and of at length prevailing over it. The law of the Spirit of life, just expresses the tendency and the result of an operative principle in the mind, that has force enough to arrest the operation of the law of sin and death, and at length to emancipate us therefrom. It is deposited within as the germ of a new character; and in virtue of which there are evolved the desire, and the purpose, and the activities, and at length all the conquests and all the achievements of a life of holiness. The affection of the old man meets with a new affection to combat and to overmatch it. If the originating principle of sin might be reduced to one brief expression, and so be shortly designed the love of the creature—the originating principle of

the spiritual life might also be briefly and summarily designed the love of the Creator. These two appetites are in a state of unceasing hostility. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. The law of sin and of death warreth against the law of the mind; and this law of the mind in the preceding context, is just the law of the Spirit of life in the verse that is now before us.

Let me now come forth in succession with a few distinct remarks upon this verse, with a view to complete our understanding of it.

First, You are already aware how it is the Spirit of God that infuses this principle into the mind, and sets agoing the law of its operation. Hence it may properly be denominated the law of the Spirit—even as the opposite process against which it has to struggle and at length to vanquish, is called the law of sin—a new tendency imparted to the soul for the purpose of arresting the old tendency and at length of extinguishing it; and called the law of the Spirit, just because referable to the Holy Ghost, by whose agency it is that the new affection has been inspired, that the new moral force has been made to actuate the soul and give another direction than before to the whole history.

But secondly—why is it called the law of the Spirit of life? Just because he in whom this law is set agoing is spiritually minded; and as to be carnally minded is death, so to be spiritually minded is life. It is the law of the Spirit, because of the agent who sets this law agoing in the soul. It is the law of the Spirit of life, because of the new state into which it ushers the soul. It is like the

awakening of man to a new moral existence, when he is awakened to the love of that God whom before he was glad to forget; and of whom he never thought but as a Being shrouded in unapproachable majesty, and compassed about with the jealousies of a law that had been violated. It is like a resurrection from the grave, when, quickened and aroused from the deep oblivion of nature, man enters into living fellowship with his God; and He, who ere now had been regarded with terror or utterly disregarded, hath at length reclaimed unto Himself all our trust and all our tenderness. It is the introduction of a before earthly creature into a region of other prospects and other manifestations, when now he can eye eternity with hope, and look up with confidence to the Lord and Disposer of his eternity. It is like imparting to him another breath, and enduing him as it were with another vitality, when, for the animal and the earthly desires which once monopolised all his affections, there spring up in his bosom the desire of spiritual excellence, and a love that reacheth unto all, and the new moral ambition that the image of the Godhead be again implanted upon his character. There is now a satisfaction and a harmony within, a rightly going mechanism of the soul that is in unison with the great purposes of his being, a refreshing sense of that native enjoyment which goodness and righteousness and truth are ever sure to bring along with them, the sunshine of a heart at peace and of a heart inhaling the purity of holy and celestial aspirations—all which make him feel as if he had entered on a

life that was new; and in comparison with which the whole of his former existence appears corrupt to him as a sepulchre, and worthless as nonentity itself. It is only now that he has begun to live, because now hath the law of the Spirit of life begun to operate in his bosom; and only now hath that well of water been struck out in his heart, which to him, even in the life that now is, is precious as the elixir of immortality and springeth up unto life everlasting.

And thirdly, when is it that this visitation of the Spirit descendeth upon the soul? When is it that this new law is set up within it; and so a power or a tendency is established there, that arrests and at length subjugates the old one? We think that the answer is to be gathered from the single expression of the law of the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus.* Whatever the import of the phrase in Christ Jesus may be, it is when so in Him that this law taketh effect upon us. As surely as when you enter a garden of sweets, one of your senses becomes awakened to the perfumes wherewith its air is impregnated—as surely as when emerging from the darkness of a close apartment to the glories of an unclouded day, another of your senses is awakened to the light and beauty of all that is visible—So surely when you enter within the fold of Christ's mediatorship, and are so united with Him as to be in Him according to the Bible signification of this phrase, then is it that there is an awakening of the inner man to the beauties of holiness. We refer to a law of nature, the impression of every scene, in which he is situated, on the

senses of the observer; and it is also by the operation of such a law, that, if in Christ Jesus, we become subject to a quickening and a reviving touch that raises us to spiritual life, and maketh us susceptible of all its joys and all its aspirations. We have the immutability of nature's laws, or rather the immutability of Him who presideth over the constancy of nature's processes, as our guarantee for an ordination which can never fail—that he who is in Christ Jesus is a new creature, that he who is in Christ Jesus walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

But fourthly—what have we to do that we may attain the condition of being in Christ Jesus? I know of no other answer than that you have to believe in Him. I know of no other instrument by which the disciple is graffed in Christ Jesus, even as the branches are in the vine, than faith. And certain it is that a connection is often directly affirmed in the Bible, between the act of believing and the descent of a quickening and sanctifying influence from above. The Holy Ghost is given to those who believe. The promise of the Spirit is unto faith. In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard. Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Jesus is the Light of the world, and the Light is the life of men—All pointing to a law of connection between our belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, and our being set at liberty by a divine power for a life of new and holy obedience.

And again, to recur to the term law as having the same sense in this verse that physical law or a law of nature has. What a security does it hold out for the sanctification of every believer! If we believe we are in Christ Jesus—if we are in Christ Jesus the Spirit will put forth such an energy as shall overmatch the corrupt principle that is within us, and set us free from its tyranny—And all this in virtue of an ordination so certain and so unfailing, as to rank with those laws which have stamped an unalterable constancy on all the processes that are going on around us. There is nought that so arrests the admiration of philosophers as the inflexibility of nature—the certainty wherewith the observations of the past may be turned into prophecies for the future—the sure evolution of the same phenomena in the same circumstances; and how, without one hair-breadth of deviation, the same trains and the same successions will be repeated over again till the end of the world. It is thus that the seasons roll in their unchanging courses; and that the mighty orbs of the firmament maintain their periods of invariable constancy; and that astronomers, presuming on the uniformity of Nature in all her processes, can, to within a second of deviation, compute the positions and the distances and the eclipses of these heavenly bodies for thousands of the years that are to come—And not only so; but, throughout all the departments of Nature to which the eye of man hath had access upon earth, do we witness a uniformity rigid as fate, and that without a miracle is never violated—insomuch that some are the philosophers who have made a divi-

nity of Nature; and who, conceiving that had there been a God there would have been more of freedom and of fluctuation in the appearances of things, have affirmed this universe, instead of a creation, to be the product of some mysterious and eternal necessity, under which all things move onward without change and without deviation. But the Christian knows better how to explain the generality and the certainty of Nature's laws, and that is not because Nature is unchangeable, but because God is unchangeable. What has been once done has been best done, and cannot be amended; and so in the same circumstances will it again and again and again be repeated. It is the perfect and unerring wisdom of Nature's God, which has banished all caprice, and stamped such a reigning consistency on the whole of Nature's processes: And when we find that each of these processes is denominated a law; and that this very term, in this very sense of it, is employed to express the union that there is between belief in Christ and the putting forth of a renewing and a sanctifying influence on the believer—I fear not lest the obedience of the gospel should lead to Antinomianism; but grant me only a true faith in the mind of an aspirant after heaven, and there will I confidently look for virtue and for holiness,

Both the certainty of Nature and the certainty of God's word are very finely expressed together in the book of Psalms. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations; thou hast established the earth and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances, for all thy servants."

And therefore would I have you to be ever dwelling upon that truth, the belief of which it is that brings down the Spirit of God upon your soul; and the very presence of which to the mind, bears a charm and a moral energy along with it. It is a thing of mystery to the general world; but to the Christian indeed, it is a thing of experience and not of mystery. Never does the way of new obedience lie more invitingly clear and open before him, than when he finds the guilt and the reckoning of his past iniquities, whereby its entrance was formerly beset, all done away through the power of the great gospel sacrifice. And never does he move with such alacrity at the bidding of the Saviour, as when under a sense of the purchased reconciliation, he feels the debt of obligation to Him for all his peace in time, and all his hopes in eternity. And never does the vigorous inspiration of light and love and freedom come so copiously upon him from the upper sanctuary, as when praying with confidence in the name of Christ, he obtains from Him the presence of the witness and the comforter. The powers and principles of the new creature, are all alimented by these various exercises of faith; and so the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and of death.

But to conclude. This freedom will be perfect in heaven, but on earth it is not so. Here it is not that freedom by which you are rid of the presence of sin. It is only that freedom by which you are rid of its tyranny. While you are in the body, you will be vexed with its solicitations; and sur-

prised perhaps into an occasional overthrow; and at all events be so annoyed by its near and besetting artifices, that you must never let down the vigilance of a prepared and determined warrior. The process by which sin leadeth unto death, consists of various steps, from the lust which conceiveth and bringeth forth—and at length, if not arrested, will finish in deeds and habits of sinfulness, which land the unhappy apostate in destruction. By the law of the Spirit of life, you will be kept free of this awful catastrophe; but not without many a weary struggle against sin in its incipient tendencies, that these tendencies may be kept in check—against sin in its restless appetites, that these appetites may be denied and at length starved into utter mortification—against sin in its tempting thoughts and tempting imaginations, that the desires of the spirit as well as the deeds of the body may be chastened into obedience, and thus your holiness be perfected. It will be freedom, no doubt; but the freedom of a country that has taken up arms against its tyrants or its invaders—of a country that has refused submission, but must fight to maintain its independence—of a country from whose gates the battle has not yet been turned away, but where the enemy is still in force, and the watchfulness of all is kept alive by the perpetual alarm of hostile designs and hostile movements. "But ye are of God, little children, and shall overcome, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world even your faith."

LECTURE XLVI.

ROMANS, viii, 3, 4.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

We have already explained the distinction between a physical law, whereby is established that order of succession, in which one event follows another; and a juridical law, or a law of authority, for the government of rational and responsible creatures. In the verse immediately preceding, the word occurs twice; but at each time with such an annexed specification, as points to the former rather than to the latter meaning of the term. There is first the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which marks, we think, that established order in the Divine administration of grace, whereby, all who are in Christ Jesus have a reviving and a sanctifying influence put forth upon them. There is then the law of sin and of death, which marks another of those constant successions, that obtain either between two events, or two states in the history of any individual—even that by which sin is followed up with an extinction of the spiritual life, with an utter incapacity for sacred employments or sacred delights; and when superadded to the negation of all those sensibilities that enter into the happiness of heaven, you have as the natural con-

sequences of sin, the agony of self-reproach, the undying worm of a conscience that never ceases to haunt and to upbraid you.

But you will observe that the term law in the verse before us, is used generally and without any accompaniments. We are not aware of any passage in the Bible, where, if so introduced, it does not signify that law which God hath instituted for the moral government of His creatures; and there can be no doubt, that it is to be understood in this juridical sense on the present occasion. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.'

But what is it that the law could not do? The answer to this is, we think, to be gathered from the next verse. It could not accomplish that end for the bringing about of which, God sent His Son into the world, and executed upon Him the condemnation that we had incurred; and this He did, it is said, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. This then is what the law failed to achieve. It could not fulfil in us its own righteousness. It could not cause us to exemplify that which itself had enacted. It could not fashion us, the children of men, according to its own pure and beautiful model; and, all perfect in excellence as its light was, it could not obtain the unsullied reflexion of it, from the living history of any of our species. As to any efficiency upon us, it was a dead letter; and did as little for the morality of the world, as if struck with impotency itself, it had been bereft of all dignity and been reduced to a

dishonoured thing, without the means or the right of vindication. The law issued forth, and with much of circumstance too, its precepts and its promulgations. But it is quite palpable that man did not obey; and, whether we look to the wickedness which stalketh abroad and at large over the face of the earth, or rest the question on each individual who breathes upon it—that the righteousness thereof, instead of being fulfilled, has been utterly and universally fallen from.

But the apostle introduces a caution here, that he might not appear to derogate from the law, by ascribing to it any proper or inherent impotency. And, for this purpose, he lets us know, what the precise quarter was in which the failure originated —not then that the law was weak in itself, but in that it was weak through the flesh. To the law, there belong a native power and efficiency, in all its lessons and all its enforcements, which is admirably fitted to work out a righteousness on the character of those to whom it is addrest. For this purpose, there is no want of force or of fitness in the agent; but there may be a want of fitness in the subject upon which it operates. It is no reflection on the penmanship of a beautiful writer, that he can give no adequate specimen of his art, on the coarse or absorbent paper, which will take on no fair impression of the character that he traces upon its surface. Nor is it any reflection on the power of an accomplished artist, that he can raise no monument thereof, from the stone which crumbles at every touch, and so is incapable of being moulded into the exquisite form of his own faultless and

finished idea. And so of the law, when it attempts to realize a portrait of moral excellence on the groundwork of our nature. It is because of the groundwork, and not of the law, that the attempt has failed; and so when he tells us of what the law could not do, lest we should be left to imagine that this was from any want of force or capacity in the law, he adds 'in that it was weak through the flesh.'

And it is to be observed, that the fulfilment of the righteousness of the law in us, was a thing to be desired—not merely that in us a beauteous moral spectacle might be reared, and so the universe become richer as it were than before in worth and in virtue; but that our righteousness should be of such a kind as would satisfy the law, as would render to the law its due, as would secure all the homage that rightfully belongs to it. This you will perceive is a distinct object from the former. That the law should impress the worth and the loveliness of its own virtues upon our character, is one thing. That the law should in us achieve the vindication of its own honour, is another. It could not do the first, through the weakness of the flesh. And as little can it do the second, excepting in those on whom it wreaks the vengeance of its insulted authority. It may be said to fulfil its own righteousness, in those to whom it serves as the ministry of condemnation. It, in the act of punishment, gives full proof of its own awful and inviolable majesty. It is a work of righteousness on the part of the law, when it pours forth the wrath, and executes the penalty that are due to disobe-

dience. There is then open demonstration made, of its strict and sacred character; and the charge of impotency cannot be preferred against the law, as to the manifestation and fulfilment of its righteousness. It does not work in the persons of the impenitent, the virtues which it enjoins, nor fulfil in this sense its own righteousness upon them. But it wreaks upon these persons the vengeance which it threatens; and in this sense, may be said to make fulfilment of its righteousness. In the persons again of those who walk after the Spirit, the virtues enjoined by the law are effectually wrought; but how, would we ask, can the law, in reference to them, acquit itself of its juridical honours?—for they too have offended. The experience of every struggling Christian in the world, bears testimony to his many violations. There is, all his life long, a shortcoming from the law's strictness and the law's purity. There is a constant offence rendered by us in these vile bodies, against that commandment which will admit of no compromise, and suffer no degradation. So that even though the personal workmanship of righteousness should be in progress—though the moral picture should be gradually brightening, into a faultless conformity to that pattern that hath been shown to us from the mount—though at length our likeness to the law should be consummated—Yet is that very law subject even now to perpetual affronts from us, on its holiness and majesty; and the question remains, how, in these circumstances, shall its righteousness be vindicated upon us—even though we do walk after the Spirit, and do not walk after the flesh?

You all understand, I trust, how it is that the gospel adjusts this deficiency. It is stated in the verse before us; and though stated often, it is like ointment, which, though often poured forth, is always the same and always precious. There was something more, you will perceive, than a Spirit necessary to work in us a personal righteousness—a sacrifice was necessary to make atonement for our personal guilt. Though the former operation were to prosper onward every day, to its full and final accomplishment—yet, without the latter provision, there would have been still the spectacle held forth of a degraded law and a dishonoured lawgiver. The righteousness of the law might have been fulfilled, in regard to the impress made by it on the character of man; but it would not have been fulfilled, in regard to the perfect and undeviating adherence due by man at all times to its own authority. And so, to use the expression of the apostle John, the Saviour came not by water only, but by water and blood. It was not enough to regenerate, it was also necessary to atone. Without the shedding forth of the Spirit there would have been no righteousness infused: But without the shedding of blood there could have been no righteousness imputed. There behoved to be the one, for the renewal of man unto obedience; and there behoved to be the other, for the remission of his sins: And those are the weightiest verses of the Bible, where, in one short and memorable sentence, both are propounded to us, as the essentials of a sinner's restoration.

Now the passage before us, is one out of many

exemplifications, that may be given us of this two-fold announcement. It might be rendered clearer to you, perhaps, by a short paraphrase. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, by sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for a sin-offering—so as thereby to condemn sin in the flesh. And this he did, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.'

You will observe here, that the first step, was to make ample reparation for the injuries sustained by the law; and so by satisfying its rights, making a full vindication of its righteousness. Ere the sinner could be operated upon so as to be transformed, the law which he had broken, it would appear, behoved to have compensation for the outrage done to it. There was a need be that the threatened penalty should not be arrested, but have its course—that it should break forth into the open and manifest discharge, which might announce to the world both the evil of sin, and the truth and justice of that God who had uttered His proclamations against it: And there seems to be a further, though perhaps to us an inscrutable propriety, in the chastisement of our peace having been borne by one, who bore our nature—in the Son having been sent, under no other likeness then the likeness of sinful flesh—in humanity having had to suffer the vengeance which humanity incurred. And though it required the strength of the Godhead to bear the burden of our world's atonement—yet seemeth there to have been, in order to the

effect of this great mystery, some deep necessity that we cannot fully penetrate, why it should be laid on God manifest in the flesh, and who took not upon Him the nature of angels, but the nature of the seed of Abraham.

And so the incarnate God suffered for our world. For this purpose, did He become flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. There were laid upon Him the iniquities of us all; and from the intelligible symptoms of a sore and cruel agony, that even the divine energies of His nature did not overbear, may we conclude that the ransom has been fully paid—and so the worth and authority of the law have been fully magnified.

And this, it would appear, is an essential step to our sanctification. There behoved to be this satisfaction rendered to the law, ere they who had transgressed it could be turned to its love and its willing obedience. That law which was written on tables of stone, had to be appeased for its violated honour, ere it was transferred into the fleshly tablets of our heart, and became there the spontaneous and emanating principle of all goodness. The blood of remission had to be shed, ere the water of regeneration could be poured forth; and so the Son of God came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and became a sin-offering, and sustained the whole weight of sin's condemnation—And, after ascending from the grave, had that Holy Ghost committed unto Him, who was not given in abundance to men till the Son of man was glorified—and it is under the power of this mighty agent, that all who put their trust in Him, are

enabled to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Thus historically, the atonement by Jesus Christ took place, before that more abundant ministration of the Spirit, which obtains under the economy of gospel—And so also personally, a belief in that atonement has the precedency to a sanctifying operation over the sinner's heart. Not till we accept Jesus Christ as the Lord our righteousness, shall we experience Him to be the Lord our strength. Not till we put faith in that blood by which our guilt is washed away, shall we be free to love the Being whom before we were afraid of. Nor till pardon is made known, shall we be loosened from the bonds of despair, or at least of callous indifference —And it is only through a pardon which is sealed by the blood of divine expiation, that to peace with God we can add a practical and purifying sense of the holiness of God. It is thus that a belief in the propitiation, is as sure to regenerate as it is to reconcile; and the knowledge that Christ was condemned in the flesh for our offences, is that which gives impulse to that heavenly career, in which we walk no longer after the flesh but after the Spirit.

We read in one epistle of the ministration of condemnation and the ministration of righteousness. The former is that which takes place under the law, when its denunciations have their course; and, as all are guilty, all are liable to the tremendous penalties of guilt. The apostle says of this ministration, that it is glorious; and glorious certainly in the exhibition which it gives of the Godhead—

of that sacredness which admits of no stain, and would recoil from the most distant approaches of evil—of that pure and lofty throne, whence every award comes forth with authority inflexible—of that rectitude which will not hold compromise with iniquity at all, and, rather than suffer it to draw near, will send out flames from the awful sanctuary of its habitation to burn up and to destory it—of that jealousy, which, like a consuming fire, spreadeth abroad among the hosts of the rebellious, so that not one shall remain a monument of God's connivance at that which He utterly abhors—of a dread intolerance for moral evil, even in the slightest shades and degrees of it, so that, rather than deign one look of acceptance to sin, every sinner must irrevocably perish. In all this, says the apostle, there is a glory—yet there is another ministration, even one of righteousness, which excelleth in glory. It is that which takes place under the gospel; and under which all the former glory is kept entire, nay enhanced into a brighter manifestation. For there too, is the Law made honourable; and there the Lawgiver is evinced to be inflexibly just, and jealous of the authority of His government; and there the sacredness of Heaven's jurisprudence is made to shine forth, if not in the punishment of sin, at least in the atonement which has been made for it; and there the vengeance due to guilt appeareth more strikingly than before, by its transference from the head of the sinner to the head of the illustrious Substitute, who trembled and suffered and died in his stead. The glories of truth and of holiness are more highly illustrated under our new economy than un-

der the old one, and with this additional glory which is all its own—that there mercy sits in benignant triumph among the now vindicated attributes of the Godhead; and sinners, who else would have been swept away into an eternity of pain and of deep oblivion, are transformed anew into the righteousness which they had lost, have their place again in the family of God—a part among the hallelujahs of the unfallen.

Let me conclude with two practical observations. In the first place see, how, in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, it is not enough that we walk as spiritual men. The more spiritual in fact that you are, the greater will your sensibility be to the remaining deficiencies of your heart and temper and conversation—the more oppressive will be your consciousness of the weight of your still unquelled carnality—the more affecting will be your remembrance, every evening, of the slips and the shortcomings of the day that hath past over you—So that if you only had to do with the law, and if its righteousness were the condition of your acceptance with God—you, though making daily progress even unto perfection, would, by every new addition to your spiritual tenderness, be only aggravating your despair. There behoved to be a daily remembrance of sin; and this, if unmixed with faith in the great propitiation, would leave you heartless and hopeless as to all the purposes of obedience. So that to the last half-hour even of a most triumphant course in sanctification, you must never lose sight of Him on whom has been laid the condemnation of all your offences—the confessions

that you make, (and you will have to make them perpetually) must be over the head of the great Sacrifice—you must still keep by your great High Priest, as the anchor of your soul; and never for a moment transfer your dependence from Him to your own righteousness—you must look for all your acceptance only in the Beloved; and count for your justification before God, on nothing else than on Jesus Christ and on Him crucified.

Now, this comes to be a mystery, which the world can never be made to understand by explanation; and which it is only for a Christian to realize in his own experience. There are constant alternations of sin and of sorrow, in the history of every believer; and the guilt of the daily transgression is actually washed away, in this case, by the evening acknowledgment—the act of confession on his part, being in very deed followed up by an act of forgiveness on the part of God. "For if any man confess his sins, God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins." And then the singularity is, (yet if you have no part in that singularity you are no Christian) it is, that, under this process of daily offending, and daily application to that blood by which it is again obliterated, there should, on the part of the disciple, be so fearful an avoidance of evil—such a dread of sin, and so grievous a discomfort when he falls into it—as honest an aspiring after his own personal righteousness, as if it formed the price of his salvation; and, withal, the same busy performance of duty that behoved to take place, had the old economy of the law been again set up, and heaven to be

challenged upon the merits of our own obedience. Yes! my brethren, it is the wondrous property of the gospel, that, while it speaks peace to the sinner, it charms the power of sin away from his heart—inducing him to love the law, at the very time that it holds out an impunity for all its violations; and, with the soft whispers of reconciliation that it sends into the offender's ear, sending along with it a moral suasion into his heart, that gains it over to the side of all the commandments.

And hence my second remark is, that, however zealously the righteousness of Christ must be contended for as the alone plea of a sinner's acceptance, yet that the benefit thereof rests upon none save those, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Light where it may, it must carry a sanctifying power along with it; and you have no part nor lot in the matter, if you are not pressing onward in grace and in all godliness. It is not enough, that upon Christ all its honours have been amply vindicated—upon you who believe in Christ all its virtues must be engraven; and it is thus, and thus alone, that there is brought about a complete and a satisfying fulfilment of its righteousness. The law is not made void by faith, but by faith it is established; and while, on the one hand, all the outrage done to it when written on tables of stone, has been repaired by the noblest of satisfactions—on the other hand, does it come forth again in all the brightness of a new and a living lustre, by its being now written on the fleshly tablets of our heart. The handwriting of ordi-

nances that was against us, and contrary to us, has been taken out of the way, having been nailed to the cross of Christ; but the hand of Jesus Christ as the Lord their Sanctifier is ever on the persons of those who believe in Him—beautifying them with His salvation, and spreading over their characters all the graces of holiness.

LECTURE XLVII.

ROMANS, viii, 5.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

I SHOULD like if I could give you a clear understanding of the difference that there is, between your simply dwelling in the flesh as your tenement —and your being immersed, with the practical consent of your will and mind, in those pursuits and pleasures which are natural to the flesh. And the first thing which might occur, for the illustration of this difference, is, to offer, as expressive of it, that distinction of meaning which one feels between the two phrases, 'to be in the flesh' and 'to be after the flesh.' The one may be thought simply to imply, that the flesh is the place of the soul's present residence; and the other, that all the soul's inclinations and energies, are in full prosecution of those objects which minister to the appetites of the flesh. But then you have the very phrase of being in the flesh applied in Scripture not to the state of one who barely occupies the flesh as his present tabernacle, but of one who delights in the flesh as his congenial and much-loved element. And it must be in this latter sense of the phrase that it occurs at the distance of a very few verses from the one now submitted to you—when it is said, that they who are in the flesh cannot please God; and when it is further said, that ye are not

in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.

At the same time it must be remarked, that, in other passages of the Bible, the phrase of being in the flesh denotes the soul's simple occupation of a fleshly tabernacle, and not the soul's immersion in fleshly habits or fleshly desires. The apostle who said that Christ liveth in me, also says I live in the flesh; and that to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. In this sense too, even Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh; and it was a most essential point of orthodoxy that He had come in the flesh. In both of these instances, flesh was the temporary abode; but in neither of them, was it the chosen or the much-loved home. It is true of both, that, though in the flesh, they walked not after the flesh; and though we have not been so fortunate, as to find the former phrase to be in the Bible universally characteristic of nothing more than simple occupancy—yet we believe of the latter phrase, that it is uniformly descriptive of that state, in which a man abandons himself to the propensities of nature, and lives in the full prosecution of its delights or its interests.

And the distinction between these two things, is very well marked by the apostle within the compass of one verse. "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not walk according to the flesh—we do not war after the flesh."

And it is well, that, in this fifth verse, we have a descriptive clause, by which we are presented with something like a definition of being after the flesh. They who are after the flesh, mind the things of

it. It is not that the flesh assails them with its suggestions, for this it does, and often as forcibly with those who resist the suggestions as with those who yield to them. But it is that their mind follows after the flesh—that they make a study and a business of its enjoyments—that they prosecute them in thought, in purpose, and in will. Some there are, who dwell in the flesh, and so are surrounded with the importunity of its delights and temptations; but who nevertheless abide in the firm attitude of withstanding them all. Their mind is not after the flesh, but in opposition to it. But for these some, there are the many, who are dragged willingly along in that very direction in which the flesh draws them—who, not only resign themselves implicitly to the force of its instigations; but who, even in their hours of calm and dispassionate exemption from them, are in some way labouring or devising for the pleasures and accommodations of the perishable body—whose mind, both in its likings and in the exercise of its faculties, is wholly given over to the pursuit of these things. What the things are, we may learn from the apostle John—when he bids us love not the world neither the things that are in the world; and when he comprehends these things in the one summary description of all that is in the world, which he maketh to consist of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Thus are we to understand of all those who are after the flesh, that either, as slaves, they are tyrannized over by the master-idols of sensuality or avarice or ambition; Or that, with a sort of free and more sovereign

agency, they at least give themselves up to the object of providing for these gratifications—that, if not dragged after them by the force of appetite, they at least drive after them, and that, of spontaneous and withal of steady and settled choice. And thus, in the habitual preference of their mind as well as in the propensities of their animal system, are they altogether entitled to the denomination of worldly.

And there is one thing that you would do well to advert unto. It is not necessary that you mind all the things of the flesh, in order to constitute you a carnal man. It is enough to fasten this character upon you, that you have given yourself over to the indulgence or the pursuit, even of so few as one of these things. A miser may not be a debauchee, and neither the one nor the other may be an aspiring politician. But whatever the reigning passion may be, if it have the effect of attaching you to some one object that is in the world, and which with the world will terminate and perish—then still your mind is in subjection to an idol, and the death of the carnally minded is your inheritance and your doom. Be not deceived then, ye men, who engrossed with the cares and observant of all the sobrieties of business, are not addicted to the profligacies of dissipation—nor ye, who, heedless of wealth's accumulations, can mix an occasional generosity with the squanderings of intemperance and riot—nor ye, who, alike exempted from sordid avarice or debasing sensuality, have yet, in the pursuit of an ascendancy over the minds and the measures of your fellow-men, made power the reign-

ing felicity of your existence—nor yet even ye, who, without any settled aim after one or other of these gratifications, fluctuate in giddy unconcern from one of this world's frivolities to another. None of you mind all the things of the flesh; yet each of you minds one or other of these things, and that to the entire practical exclusion of the things of the Spirit from the preference of your habitual regards. We do not charge you with a devotion of heart to all those things in the world, which are opposite to the love of the Father—any more than we charge you, with idolatrously falling down in obeisance to all the divinities of a heathen polytheism. But still if only one of these divinities be your god, this were enough to constitute you an idolater, and to convict you of a sacrilegious disownal of the King who is eternal and immutable. And so your one earthly appetite, though free from the tyranny of all the others—your one habit of ungodliness, though it be the only one that breaks out into visible expression in the history of your life—of itself renders you a carnal man; of itself exiles you from the spiritual territory; of itself proves that you are still one of the children of this world, and that you have not passed from death unto life.

'They who are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.' The man to whom this character belongeth is as effectually tabernacled in flesh, as he who is altogether carnal; and the natural tendencies of his constitution to evil, may be as strong and as urgent as those of the latter. By temperament, for instance, he might have as great a taste for luxury—by original disposition, he might be

as apt to rejoice in grandeur or in wealth; and there be spontaneously within him, the same kindlings of ambition, or the same grovellings of sensual and avaricious desire. But though he feels these impulses, yet he walketh not after them; and that just because his mind is wholly set against them—whereas the mind of the other goeth wholly along with them. It is the direction of that sovereign faculty the will, which explains the difference. If this be enlisted on the side of the flesh, as it is with every unconverted man, then he sinneth wilfully. If this be enlisted on the side of the Spirit, as it is with every man who hath truly turned him unto the Lord Jesus Christ—then he may sin accidentally; and, in some moment of sleep or of surprise, he may be overtaken; and ere the will, as it were, has had time to rally and to recover, some outpost may have been carried, and even some advantage have been gained to the length of a most humiliating overthrow. But deep is the grief, that is thereby awakened; and strenuous is the resistance, that is thereby summoned into the future warfare; and heavy is that mourning of sackloth and of ashes, wherewith the soul of the penitent offender is afflicted; and though he hath stumbled on the way of temptation, yet utterly he refuses to walk therein—so giving testimony to the mode, in which the leading tendencies of his spirit have most painfully and most offensively been thwarted by the momentary power and assault of his great adversary; and that the whole drift of his choosing and deliberating and purposing faculties, is indeed on the side of God and the side of righteousness.

The remark that we made however about the things of the flesh, is not applicable to the things of the Spirit. A giving up of the mind to but one thing of the flesh, makes you a carnal man. But a spiritual man gives up himself not to one thing, but to all the things of the Spirit. To be the servant of any other master than God, marks you an idolater; and, for this purpose, it is not necessary that you should obey all the masters who are apart from God or hostile to God. But to be the servant of God Himself, you must obey Him in all things—you must aspire at least, and that in firmness and in truth, at universal conformity—you must mind, not merely one thing, but all the things which He authoritatively lays upon you. And these are just the things of the Spirit, whose fruit is not in any one branch of righteousness, or in any specific number of them—but whose fruit is in all righteousness and goodness and truth. His office is to put the law in your heart, and so to give you a taste and a liking for all its acquirements. It is not enough that you maintain the sobrieties of human conduct, if not its equities also. It is not enough that you be strict in honour, if not also kind and gentle in humanity. It is not enough that you excel your fellows in all the virtues of society—you must be further arrayed in the virtues of sacredness. And neither is it enough that a general sabbath complexion be upon your history—You must proceed on Christianity being the religion of your life, being the guide and the ornament of your daily conversation—a mingling ingredient, which diffuses itself throughout the mass of your ordinary

affairs—a light that sheds its pure and celestial tint over the whole of your path; and leaves not one little space in the field of humanity unirradiated by its beams.

You have already heard me expatiate on the difficulty of ascertaining the real state and character of one's mind, by a direct examination of it; and if the immediate question were put to the inner man, whether he minded the things of the flesh or those of the Spirit, a clear answer might not so readily be obtained—and that, more especially, as they who are spiritual often feel on the one hand the instigations of the flesh; and they who are carnal have at times the visitation upon their heart, of a wish and an aspiration and an effort however ineffectual after a life of sacredness. It is well then, that this verse supplies us with a test for the resolving of this ambiguity. They who mind the things of the flesh, are they who walk after the flesh; and they who mind the things of the Spirit, are they who walk after the Spirit. With both classes, there may be the inward struggle of the opposite and conflicting elements—the one not being totally exempted from evil inclinations, and the other not being totally bereft of their longing after godliness. When we look only within, it may be hard to say from the fight that is going on, which of these two elements shall prevail. But this may be decisively gathered, if not from the battle itself, at least from the issue of the battle; or, in other words, from the way in which it terminates upon the conduct. The spiritual man is urged by the corrupt propensities of his nature—nevertheless he

follows not after them, and this from that preponderance of motive and of inward power on the side of what is good, which marks his mind to be set on the things of the Spirit. The carnal man is urged by the voice of conscience, and its remonstrances against all that is evil—nevertheless he obeys it not in deed, and this from that prevalency of force and of impulse on the side of what is corrupt, which marks his mind to be set on the things of the flesh. The working of the inner mechanism is not palpable. But the result of that working on the outward history is so; and thus from the stream do we learn the nature of the fountain, and by the test of man's fruits do we know them.

LECTURE XLVIII.

ROMANS, viii, 6.

"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

The death which is here spoken of, is something more than the penal death that is inflicted on transgressors, in the way of retribution. It is not a future but a present death which is here spoken of; and arises from the obtuseness or the extinction of certain feelings and faculties in the soul, which, if awake to their corresponding objects, would uphold a life of thoughts and sensations and regards, altogether different from the actual life of unregenerated men. To the higher and spiritual life they are dead even now; and, to estimate the soreness of this deprivation, just figure an affectionate father to have a paralysis inflicted on all those domestic feelings, which bound him in love and endearment to the members of his own family. Then would you say of him, that he had become dead to the joys and the interests of home—that perhaps he was still alive to the gratifications of sense and of profligacy, but that what wont to constitute the main charm of his existence had now gone into annihilation—that to what at one time was the highest pleasurable feeling of his consciousness, he had become as torpid as if he had literally expired—and that thus he was labouring under all the calamity of a death, to that which occupies a high

place among the delights of the feeling and the friendly and the amiable. And it is in a sense analogous to this, that we are to understand the present death of all those who are carnally-minded —not a death to any of the impressions that are made upon their senses from without—not a death to the animal enjoyments of which men are capable—not even, it may be, a death to many of the nobler delights either of the heart or of the understanding—But a death to that which when really felt and enjoyed, is found to be the supreme felicity of man—a death to all that is spiritual—an utter extinction of those capacities by which we are fitted to prove those heavenly and seraphic extacies, that would liken us to angels—a hopeless apathy in all that regards our love to God, and to all that righteousness which bears upon it the impress of the upper sanctuary. It is our dormancy to these, which constitutes the death that is here spoken of; and in virtue of which man is bereft, if not of his being, at least of the great end of his being which is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.

And you may further see how it is—that such a death is not merely a thing of negation, but a thing of positive wretchedness. For with the want of all that is sacred or spiritual about him, there is still a remainder of feeling, which makes him sensible of his want—a general restlessness of the soul, on whose capacities there has been inflicted a sore mutilation; and from whose aspirings after undefinable good, the object is ever melting away into hopeless and inaccessible distance—a remorse and a terror about invisible things, which are ever and

anon breaking forth, even amid the busy appliance of this world's opiates, to stifle and overbear them. And there are other miseries, that are sure to spring up from those carnal sensibilities which have undergone no death—from the pride that is met with incessant rebuke and mortification, by the equal pride of our fellow-men—from the selfishness that comes into collision, with all the selfishness of the unregenerated society around it—from the moral agonies which essentially adhere to malice and hatred and revenge—from the shame that is annexed, even on earth, to the pursuits of licentiousness—from the torture that lieth in its passions, and the gloomy desolation of heart which follows the indulgence of them—All these give to the sinner his foretaste of hell on this side of death; and, whether they be aggravated or not by the fire and the brimstone and the arbitrary inflictions that are conceived to be discharged upon him in the place of vengeance—still they are enough, when earth is swept away, with all its refuges of amusement and business and guilty dissipation, in which the mind can now be lulled into a forgetfulness of itself—they are enough to entail upon the second and the eternal death, a burden of enormous and incalculable wretchedness—a curse so felt and so agonized under by the outcasts of condemnation, as to make the utterance of Cain their theme of wailing and of weeping through all eternity, even that their punishment is greater than they can bear.

From what we have said of the death of those who are carnally, you will be at no loss to under-

stand what is meant by the life of those who are spiritually-minded. We read of those who are alienated from the life of God, and to this it is that the spiritual find readmittance. They before stood afar off, and now are brought nigh. The blood of Christ hath consecrated for them a way of access; and the fruit of that access is delight in God—the charm of a confidence, which they never felt before, in His friendly and fatherly regard to them—a new moral gladness in the contemplation of that character, which now stands revealed in all its graces, while it is disarmed of all its terrors—an assimilation of their own character to His, and so a taste for charity and truth and holiness; and a joy, both in the cultivation of all these virtues, and in the possession of a heart at growing unison with the mind and will of the Godhead. These are the ingredients of a present life, which is the token and the foretaste of life everlasting—an existence in the feelings and concerns of which, all earthly existence is tasteless and unsatisfying; and to be awakened whereunto, is a transition as great and more joyful than for a dead man to be awakened from his grave.

But let me pass on from the life to the peace of those who are spiritually-minded. There are two great causes of disturbance, to which the peace of the heart is exposed. The first is a brooding anxiety, lest we shall be bereft or disappointed of some object on which our desires are set. The second is the agitation felt by all who have a taste for human kindness; and which taste is most painfully agonised, amid the fierceness and the

tumult and the din of human controversy. You will at once perceive how the man who is spiritually-minded, rises above the first of these disquietudes—for there is an object paramount to all which engrosses the care of a worldly man, and on which his desires are supremely set; and so what to others are overwhelming mortifications, to him are but the passing annoyances of a journey; and the same revolution of fortune which would plunge the earthly in despair, leaves to him who is heavenly a splendid reversion of hope and of happiness. So that neither can the actual visitation of any disaster so utterly discomfit him; nor can the apprehension of its coming so torment his bosom, with the dark imagery of poverty and ruin and blasted anticipations. To him there is an open vista, through which he might descry a harbour and a home, on the other side of the stormy passage that leads to it; and this he finds enough to bear him up, under all that vexes and dispirits other men. The pure and lofty serene which lies beyond the grave, gives a serene to his own bosom. The main question of his being is settled; and that enables him to sit loose, and to be lightly affected, by all the inferior questions. His soul is at anchor; and so he is kept steady, under all the fluctuations that would make utter shipwreck of the desires or the delights of the worldly. He is freed from the cares of fame, or of fortune, or of any other interest upon earth; and with a mind engrossed by that which is spiritual, and without room in it for the anxieties of what is seen and temporal, he, in as far as these anxieties are concerned, is at peace.

I know not a finer illustration of this topic, than one which may be gathered from a recorded conversation, between Dr. Carey the missionary at Serampore and a wealthy merchant in Calcutta. One of his clerks had determined to give up all the prospects and emoluments of a lucrative situation, and henceforth devote himself to the work of evangelising the heathen. His employer, to whom this looked a very odd and inexplicable resolution, called on Dr. Carey; and enquired from him the terms, and the advantages, and the preferments of this new line, to which a very favourite servant whom he was exceedingly loath to part with was now on the eve of betaking himself; and was very much startled to understand, that it was altogether a life of labour and that there was no earthly remuneration whatever—that, in truth, it was not competent for any member of their mission to have property at all—that beyond those things which are needful for the body, there was not an enjoyment within the power or purchase of money, which any one of them thought of aspiring after—that each of them, free from care like a commoner of nature, trusted that as the day came the provision would come, and never yet had been disappointed of their confidence—that, with hearts set on their own eternity and the eternity of their fellow-creatures, they had neither time nor space for the workings of this world's ambition. So that, however occupied about the concerns of the soul, each felt light as the bird upon a thorn, about the food and the raiment and the sufficiency of coming days, all which they cast upon Providence, and had

ever yet found that Providence was indeed worthy of their reliance. There is a very deep interest to my mind in such a dialogue, between a devoted missionary and a busy active aspiring merchant; but the chief interest of it lay in the confession of the latter, who seems to have been visited with a glimpse of the secret of true happiness, and that after all he himself was not on the way to it—whose own experience told him that, prosperous as he was, there was a plague in his very prosperity that marred his enjoyment of it—that the thousand crosses and hazards and entanglements of mercantile adventure, had kept him perpetually on the rack, and rifled his heart of all those substantial sweets by which alone it can be purely and permanently gladdened. And from him it was indeed an affecting testimony—when, on contrasting his own life of turmoil and vexation and checkered variety, with the simple but lofty aims and settled dependence and unencumbered because wholly unambitious hearts of these pious missionaries, he fetched a deep sigh and said that it was indeed a most enticing cause.

And some of you perhaps, though not spiritual men, may have caught a like glimpse of the peace that the spiritually-minded enjoy in the recurrence of your weekly Sabbath—the very chime of whose morning bells may have the effect of tranquillising you under the weight of this world's cares; and even from the pulpit ministrations may there descend a power to soothe and to sweeten and to elevate your bosoms, and, while it continues to operate, may all the perplexities of your business

and common life be forgotten. Now just figure this influence, which with you may be flitting and momentary like a vision of romance—just figure it to be substantiated into a practical and a permanent habit of heavenly-mindedness, and then you have the peace of the spiritual realised throughout the whole extent of their every-day history.

There is another cause, by which the peace of many a heart is sadly torn—not by the fear of future misfortune but by the actual feeling of present malice and hostility—by being doomed to breathe in the rough atmosphere of debate; and having to witness the withering coldness and alienation that sit on the human countenance, as well as to hear the jarring discords of rancour and controversy when they come forth in unfriendly utterance from human lips. There are some minds to which the frown, and the fierceness, and the incessant threatenings of this moral warfare, are utterly insupportable—some who have a taste for cordiality and cannot be happy, when its smile and its softness and all its blessed charities are withdrawn from them—who, rather than be placed in the midst of unkindred spirits, would give up society and seek for recreation and repose among the peaceful glories of nature—who long to be embowered amid the sweets of a solitude and a stillness, into which the din of this fatiguing world would never enter; and where, in the calm delights of meditation and piety, they might lull their hearts into the forgetfulness of all its injustice and all its violence. It must have been some such affection

as this that prompted the Archbishop Leighton, when he breathed out his desires for the lodge of a wayfaring man in the wilderness; and that haunted the whole public life of Luther, who, though dragged forth to the combats and the exposures of a very wide arena, yet felt all along how uncongenial they were to the right condition and well-being of the human spirit; and so did he unceasingly aspire after a tranquillity which he was never permitted to enjoy—a nursling of that storm which he had enough of softness most utterly to hate, and enough of intrepidity most manfully to brave—by nature a lover of quietness, yet by Providence had he his discipline and his doom amongst life's most boisterous agitations.

There is nought in the character of the spiritually-minded, that exempts them from the outward disturbance, which has its source in the hatred and hostility of other men; but there is so much in this character that gives an inward stability, and sustains the patience and the hope of our souls even under the most outrageous ebullitions of human malignity, as most nobly to accredit the declaration of our text—that to be spiritually-minded is not only life but peace. For there is the sense of a present God, in the feeling of whose love there is a sunshine which the world knoweth not, and which even the lowr of a hostile world in arms cannot utterly darken; and there is the prospect of a future heaven, in whose sheltering bosom it is known that the toil and the turbulence of this weary pilgrimage will soon be over; and there is even a charity, that mellows our present

sensation of painfulness, and makes the revolt that is awakened by the coarse and vulgar exhibition of human asperity to be somewhat more tolerable—for we cannot fail to perceive, how much of delusion at all times mingles with the impetuosity of irritated feelings; and that were there more of mutual knowledge among the individuals of our species, there would be vastly more of mutual candour and amenity and love; and that the Saviour's plea in behalf of His enemies, is in some sense applicable to all the enemies that we have in the world—"They know not what they do." The menace and the fury and the fell vindictiveness that look all so formidable, are as much due to an infirmity of the understanding as to a diabolical propensity of the heart; and it does alleviate the offence that is given to our moral taste by the spectacle of malevolence, when one reflects that malice is not its only ingredient—that it often hangs as much by an error of judgment, as by a perversity of the moral nature—that it needs only to be enlightened in order to be rectified; and that therefore there may be hope of deliverance from the ferocity of one's antagonists even in this world, as well as a sure and everlasting escape from it in those regions of beauty and of bliss, around which there is an impassable barrier of protection against all that offendeth—where, after having crossed the stormy passage of this world, the spirit will have to repose itself in peace and charity for ever.

In one word, and for the full vindication of our text, let it be observed, that, though in the character of being spiritually-minded there is no im-

munity from the tribulations that are in the world, yet there is a hiding-place and a refuge where the spiritual alone can find entry—so that though in the world they do have tribulations, yet well may they be of good cheer, for in Christ they do have peace.

LECTURE XLIX.

ROMANS, viii, 7, 8.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

But it might appear from the 7th verse, that the peace spoken of in the last verse is peace with God—for the enmity which is here ascribed to the opposite state of being carnally-minded, is enmity against God. Where there is enmity between two parties, each is displeased with the other; and the enmity of the carnal mind thus involves in it two distinct particulars. First, it implies a feeling on the part of him who is its owner of hostility against God, and this necessarily comes out of the very definition of the carnal mind. It were a contradiction in terms, to say otherwise of the carnal mind than that it was enmity against God—for how, if all its preferences be toward the creature, can it be otherwise affected toward that Creator, who looks with a jealous eye on all such preference, and fastens upon it the guilt of idolatry—how, if its regards are wholly directed to sense and time, can it be otherwise than in a state of disregard to Him who is a spirit and invisible? If the law of God be a law of supreme love toward Himself, how is it possible for that mind to be in subjection to such a law, whose affections are wholly set on the things and the interests of a passing world? It not only is not sub-

ject to this law, but it cannot be so—else it were no longer carnal. It would instantly be stripped of this epithet, and become a different thing from what it was before, did it undergo a transference in its likings from the things that are made to Him who is the Maker of them all. It has all the certainty in it of an identical proposition, when it is said of the carnal mind that it neither is nor can be subject to God's law. Ere it become subject, it must resign its present nature and be carnal no longer. The epithet then will not apply to it; and though a mind before carnal should now have gathered upon it the character of heaven, and become a devoted and willing and most affectionate subject under the government of God—still it holds true of the carnal mind that it is not so subject, neither indeed can be.

But it is not only logically true, that the carnal mind cannot be subject to God's law—the same thing is also true physically and experimentally. There is no power in the mind by which it can change itself. It has a natural sovereignty, we admit, which extends a certain way over the doings of the outer man; but it has no such sovereignty over the desires of the inner man. It can, for example, constrain the man in whom it resides to eat a sour apple rather than a sweet. But it cannot constrain him to like a sour apple rather than a sweet. There are many things which it finds to be practicable, which it does not find to be palatable; and it has just as little power over the taste and affections of the mind toward God, as it has over the bodily organ of taste, or the law of its va-

rious relishes for the various food which is offered to it. There are a thousand religious-looking things which can be done; but, without such a renewal of the spirit as the spirit itself cannot achieve —these things cannot be delighted in, cannot be rejoiced in. But if not rejoiced in, they really are not religious, however religious they may look. And this is the great moral helplessness, under which we labour. We can compel our feet to the house of God, but we cannot compel our feelings to a sacred pleasure in its exercises. We can take a voluntary part in the music of its psalms, but we cannot force into our hearts the melody of praise. We can bid our hands away from depredation and violence, but we cannot bid away the appetite of covetousness from our bosoms. We can refrain ourselves from the infliction of all outward hurt upon our neighbour; but tell me, if we can so muster and so dispose of our affections at the word of command, as that we shall love him as we do ourselves. And, ascending from the second great commandment to the first great commandment of the law, we can, it may be thought, keep the Sabbaths of the Lord and acquit ourselves of many of the drudgeries of a carnal obedience—while, instead of loving Him with all our heart and soul and strength and mind, there exists against Him an antipathy, which we can no more extirpate, than we can cause a sycamine tree to be plucked up by the roots at the utterance of a voice—So that, in reference to the law which claims a supremacy over the heart, and taketh cognizance of all its affections, we are not and we cannot be subject to it.

And here I am sensible, that, when I charge you with a positive enmity against God—when I say that He is not merely the object of indifference, but of hatred—when I affirm of the human heart, not merely a light and heedless unconcern about Him, but also the virulency of a strong hostile affection against Him—I might not, in all this assertion, obtain the exact or the willing respondency of your own consciences. You may be ready to answer, that, really we are not at all aware of any thing half so foul or so enormous at work in our bosoms, as any ill-will towards God. We may be abundantly regardless of Him and of His laws; but we feel not any thing that approaches to a resentful emotion excited within us by His name. We may not think of Him often; and perhaps are very well satisfied to do without Him, if He would but let us alone. But, examine ourselves as we may, we can detect no affirmative malignity in our affections towards Him; and for once we have lighted upon a case, where the dogmata of a stern theology are really not at one with the decisions of our own intimate and personal experience.

Now on this we have to observe, that the greatest enemy whom you have in the world will excite no malevolent feeling in your heart, so long as you do not think of him. All the time that he is absent from your remembrance, he has no more power to stir up the painful and the bitter feeling of hostility within you, than if he were blotted out from the map of existence. And so let it not be wondered at, that you should not be ruffled out of your complacency by the thought of God, when in fact, for

days or hours together, the thought is utterly away from you—that no acrimony about Him should ever disturb you, during the whole of that period, when at play or pleasing yourselves with His gifts, the Giver is wholly unminded—that, instead of carrying the tone or the aspect of an enraged adversary toward God or any one else, you should simply appear in the light of an easy comfortable good-humoured man, while, busied with the enjoyments of life, you have no room in your regards for Him who gave the life, and scattered these enjoyments over it. When one is in a deep and dreamless slumber, his very resentments are hushed, along with all his other sensibilities, into oblivion; and though in the latent dormitory within, there should lie a fell and unextinguishable hatred against the deadliest of his foes, yet even the presence of that foe would awaken no asperity; and, while under the immediate eye of him whom with implacable revenge he could call forth to the field of mutual extermination, might he lie in all the meekness of infancy. And so of you who are not awake unto God—who are sunk in dullest apathy about Him and all His concerns—who, profoundly asleep and forgetful, are really no judges of the recoil that would come upon your spirits, did He but stand before you in all His characters of uncompromising truth, and inflexible justice, and sacred jealousy, and awful unapproachable holiness. By the thought of this Being you are not disturbed, because, steeped in the lethargy of nature, it is a thought that does not come with a realizing touch upon your perceptions. You may even hear His

name, and this may stir up some vague conception of an unseen Spirit; and you still may have no feeling of that enmity which our text has charged upon you. But the conception of whom or of what we would ask?—Is it of the true God in His true attributes—or a being of your own imagination? Is it of that God who is a Spirit, and claims of you those spiritual services which are due unto the character that belongs to Him? Is it of Him, the very view and aspect of whom would mar all your earthly gratifications, or put them utterly to flight, because of His paramount demand for the affections and pursuits of godliness? Oh how little do we know of ourselves, or of the mysteries of our inner man, which may lie hid and dormant for years—till some untried circumstances shall form the occasion that proves us, and reveals to us all which is in our hearts. And thus the manifestation to our understandings of God, not as we fancy Him to be, but of God as He actually is, would call forth of its hiding-place the unappeasable enmity of nature against Him; and would make it plain to the conscience of the carnal man, how little sufferance he hath for the God that would bereave him of his present affections, and implant others in their room. The disrelish would be just as strong, as are the disrelish and opposition between the life of sense and the life of faith. Did God reveal Himself now to the unconverted sinner, He would strike the same arrow into his heart, that will be felt by the condemned sinner, who eyes on the day of reckoning the sacredness and the majesty of that Being whom he has offended. You have heard Him by the hearing of the ear, and yet remain unconvinced

of nature's enmity. Could you say with Job that now mine eye seeth, then would you see cause with him, wherefore you should abhor yourself, and repent in dust and in ashes.

Ver. 8. My remarks have been hitherto on the hostility that is in our hearts towards God; but this verse leads us to consider the hostility that is in God's heart toward us. If we cannot please God we necessarily displease Him; nor need we to marvel, why all they who are in the flesh are the objects of His dissatisfaction. We may be still in the flesh, yet do a thousand things, as I said before, that, in the letter and in the exterior of them, bear a visible conformity to God's will, and yet cannot be pleasing to Him. They may be done from the dread of His power—they may be done under the trembling apprehension of a threatened penalty—they may be done to appease the restlessness of an alarmed conscience—they may be done under the influence of a religion that derives all its power over us from education or custom, or the exactions of a required and established decency; and yet not be done with the concurrence of the heart, not be done from a liking either to the task or to the bidder of it, not from a delight in the commandment but from the slavish fear of that master who issued it. And however multiplied the offerings may be, which we laid on the altar of such a reluctant obedience as this, they will not and cannot be pleasing to God. Would any father amongst you be satisfied with such a style of compliance and submission from your own children? Would the labour of their hands be counted enough, though the love of their hearts was withheld from you? Would you

think that you had all out of them which was desirable, because you had as much of drudgery as was laid upon them—however grievous you saw was the distaste which they felt for you and for all your requirements? If it were quite palpable, that their inclinations were in a state of revolt against you—would you think it ample compensation, that you still could restrain their outward movements, and by the force or terror of your authority, could compel from them the homage of all their services? Oh let us know if you could sit down in complacency, because of such an obedience from your own children! And if you but saw that in their hearts, they were inly pining and murmuring and feeling resentfully, because of the utter repugnance which they felt to you and to your exactions, were it not the most wretched of all atonements, that still the bidding was executed, and still the task was performed by them?

And it is thus that I would like to reach the hearts of the careless, with the alarm of a guilt and a danger, far greater than they have ever been aware of. I should like them to understand, that they are indeed the haters of God—that they hate Him for what He is, and hate Him for what He requires at their hands; and though this hostile propensity of theirs lies hid in deep insensibility, when, amidst the bustle and the engrossment and the intense pursuits or gratifications of the world, there is nothing to call it out into distinct exhibition—yet that a demonstration of the divine will or the divine character is all which is needed, to bring up the latent virulence that is lurking in the bosom, and to convict the now placid and amiable man that

he is indeed an enemy to his Maker. And in these circumstances, is his Maker too an enemy to him. The frown of an offended Lawgiver resteth on every one, who lives in habitual violation of His first and greatest commandment. There is a day of reckoning that awaits him. There is a true and unerring judgment which is in reserve for him. That enmity which now perhaps is a secret to himself, will become manifest on the great occasion when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open; and the justice of God will then be vindicated, in dealing with him as an enemy. Such is the condition, and such are the prospects of all who remain what Nature made them—who, still in the flesh, have not been translated to that new moral existence into which all are ushered who are born again; and who by simply being lovers of the creature more than of the Creator, prove themselves to be still carnally-minded and to be the heirs of death.

And it is only by taking a deep view of the disease, that you can be led adequately to estimate the remedy. There is a way of transition from the carnal to the spiritual. There is a distinct and applicable call, that may be addressed even to the farthest off in alienation; and which, if he will hear and follow, shall transform him from one of the children of this world to one of the children of light. The trumpet giveth not an uncertain sound, for it declares the remission of sin through the blood of Jesus, and repentance through the Spirit which is at His giving; and your faith in the one will infallibly bring down upon you, all the aids and influences of the other. To you who are afar off, is this salvation preached; and the grand connect-

ing tie by which it is secured and appropriated to your soul, is simply the credit that you give to the word of this testimony. Many feel not the disease; and so all the proclamations of grace pass unheeded by. Many listen to them as they would to a pleasant song; but the form of sound words is enough for them, and the realities which these words express never find admittance into their bosoms. But some there are whose ears and whose eyes are opened—who are made to hear with effect, and to behold the wondrous things that are contained in the word of God. With them the gospel is something more than a sound or an imagination. To them it bears all the character of a great authentic transaction between Heaven and Earth. And they see God as God in Christ waiting to be gracious; and they no longer stand in dread of a justice that is now most abundantly satisfied; and they can brave the contemplation of all the attributes, wherewith mercy to themselves is now blended in fullest harmony; and they rejoice to behold that the throne of Heaven is at once upheld in all its august dignity, and yet that even the chief of sinners has a warrant to approach it; and while they take to themselves the security that is guaranteed by the atonement on the cross, they feel how that very atonement affords most entire illustration of the sacredness of the Godhead. And thus, uniting peace to their own souls with glory to God in the highest; they experience a love which was before unfelt, which weans them from all their idolatrous affections, and translates them from the state of the carnally to that of the spiritually-minded.

LECTURE L.

ROMANS, viii, 9.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

THERE is nought more undeniable, than the antipathy of nature to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. This, it is likely, may have been felt by many of yourselves—and many have been the devices of human ingenuity, for mitigating the offensive features of the truth as it is in Jesus. We are not sure but that the doctrine of the Spirit calls out a more painful revolt from the children of this world, than even the doctrine of the Sacrifice. At least, the attempts and plausibilities have been just as frequent, for explaining it away. And this, perhaps, is the right place, for adverting to the way in which it has been endeavoured, to make all that is revealed of the Holy Ghost and of His regenerating influence upon man, more palatable than it naturally is to unrenewed taste—more fitted to satisfy the demand which obtains for a religion, that shall be altogether rational and devoid of mystery.

Agreeably to this it has been affirmed, that to have the Spirit of God implies no personal visitation by Him upon the soul; and, more particularly, no indwelling on His part in man, as His residence or as His habitation. One, it is thought, may be

rightly enough said to have the Spirit of God, if, from any cause whatever, it so happens that there be a resemblance of character and disposition and principle between him and the Divinity—just as any active and devoted philanthropist of our day may be said to have the spirit of Howard, without its ever being imagined, that there has been any transmigration into his body of that soul by which the body of Howard was animated. All that is intended is, that there is a common or kindred character between the one philanthropist and the other—just as we would say of a philosopher, that he had the spirit of Newton; or of a daring conspirator that he had the soul of Catiline. And thus has it been attempted to gloss over the truth, that there is in the souls of believers an actual occupancy by a Spirit from on high, or even so much as the communication of any influence from the one to the other; and to have the Spirit of God is understood as nothing more, than to be in the possession of godlike excellencies or virtues—that to have the Spirit of Christ is nothing more, than just to have the like mind in us that was also in the Lord Jesus.

It is their favourite imagination of the sufficiency of human nature, which attaches them to this style of interpretation. They look upon it as a nature liable to the errors and infirmities of an occasional waywardness—but radically and substantially as sound; and possessed within itself of energies and principles enough, for the attainment of all that spiritual excellence which qualifies for heaven. They deem it to be in the power of ordinary moral

suasion from without, to guide and accomplish humanity for the joys of an everlasting state; and they utterly repudiate the conception of any thing so altogether visionary in their eyes, as that of a new and preternatural infusion from above, by which the mind of man is transformed—and an impulse given, diametrically opposite to the bias of those native and original propensities which belong to it. They count, in fact, upon no greater transition, than from what is held base and dishonourable in our world, to what is held in it worthy of moral estimation. Now the fact is undeniable, that there are very many who stand in no need of any such transition at all; however great the revolution of principle must be, by which, from the creatures of sight and of sense and of mere earthliness, we are led to walk by faith—to be habitually and practically conversant with the things of an unseen world—to hold the concerns of immortality, as paramount to all the pursuits and interests of a fleeting pilgrimage; and, above all, to have a continual respect unto God as the supreme Master both of our affections and of our performances—as the Being with whom we most emphatically have to do. Now you, I trust, are aware of the necessity of this transition—of the magnitude of that change which all must undergo, ere they are fit for that heaven, the delights and the occupations of which are at such variance with the delights and occupations of this planet, now in a state of exile from heaven's family. And in proportion as you highly estimate the requisite transformation, so will you highly estimate the re-

quisite power for carrying it into accomplishment; and you will be prepared for all the descriptions which the Bible gives, of the utter helplessness of man in himself for so mighty and decisive a change upon his own constitution—that just as there is nought of energy in a dead body for the revival of itself, but the principle of animation must come to it from without—so we, to be quickened unto a right sense of spiritual things, and to be made alive to the power of them, must be the subjects of a foreign or adventitious influence, which has no original residence in our nature; must be born again; must have the Spirit of God to dwell in us; must be operated upon by an energy as distinct and separate from our own proper selves, as the body of Christ was: And accordingly are we told in one of these verses, that it is He who raised up Christ from the dead, who also quickens our mortal bodies by the Spirit which dwelleth in us.

It is this, in fact, which advances our state from that of being in the flesh to that of our being in the Spirit. We are in the latter state—if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us. It is upon the entrance of Him, who bloweth where He listeth, that the whole of this great translation hinges; and it is well that you know, in all its certainty and distinctness, what that event is by which we are called out from death unto life—from being one of the children of this world, to being one of the children of God's kingdom.

'Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' Still to have the Spirit of Christ is here to be understood, not in the light of

our possessing a kindred character to that of Christ, but of our being the subjects of an actual and personal inhabitation by the Spirit. The Spirit of God may be denominated the Spirit of Christ—either because the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son; or, more particularly, because the Son, now that He is exalted at the Father's right hand, is entrusted with the dispensation of Him. You know the order of this economy in the work of our redemption. Christ finished on earth the work that was given Him to do. He yielded, in our stead, a perfect obedience to the law of God; and He suffered, in our stead, all the penalties that were annexed to its violation. And having thus wrought our acceptance with God, He attained as His reward, the power of sanctifying all those whom He had saved. That instrument was put into His hands, by which He could wash away the pollution of that sin, whose guilt He had expiated—and by which He could beautify with all the lustre of heaven's graces, those for whom He had purchased a right of admittance into heaven's family. Our renewal unto holiness and virtue, is, in fact, part of the fruit of the travail of His soul; and the way in which it is accomplished, is, by the forthgoing of the Spirit at the bidding or will of our exalted Saviour. When He ascended on high, it is said, that He led captivity captive, and obtained gifts for men, even for the rebellious; and the most supereminent of these gifts is the Holy Spirit. It is through Christ that the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, are shed upon us abundantly. It is when the Spirit descends upon us, that the power of Christ is said to rest

upon us. Hence the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are equivalent, the one to the other. And as the Saviour uniformly regenerates all whom He redeems—as the conjunction is invariable, between the penalty being lifted off from our persons, and a purifying influence being laid upon our characters —as it is true, even in the moral sense of the term, that if He wash us not we have no part in Him—The truth is inevitable, and cannot be too urgently impressed on all our consciences, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.

But though it must not be denied, that to have the Spirit of Christ, implies the entrance and the abode of a personal visitor with the soul, yet we have no other way of ascertaining that we have been thus privileged, but by our having become like in character with the Saviour. We can only judge of His being in us, by the impress He has made upon us. He often enters without one note of preparation, like the wind that bloweth where he listeth, and we know not whence he cometh. It is by the fruit alone that we know; and there is not another method of verifying that He has been at work with our souls, but by the workmanship that is manifest thereupon. So that though to have the Spirit of Christ, be something more than that our Spirit is like unto His—yet it is by the latter only as the effect, that we can infer the operation of the Saviour as the cause. And therefore the question, whether you belong to the Saviour or not, still hinges upon the question—whether there be the same mind in you that was also in the Lord Jesus.

And therefore it is thus that we ought to exam-

ine ourselves. That we may know what to pray for, we should advert to the work of God's Spirit upon our soul—as that by which alone the requisite transformation into another character can take effect upon us. But then to fix and ascertain the question, whether there have been any such work, we have nought to do but to read the lineaments of that character. It is right to be humbled into the impression of our own original and utter worthlessness, as destitute of any good thing; and as wanting the power in ourselves, either to import what is good from abroad, or to raise it from within by any operation which lies within the compass of nature's mechanism. It is but proper for us to know, that for all that is of spiritual worth or estimation belonging to us, we stand indebted to an influence that is exterior to ourselves, and that comes to us from abroad—so as that each may say with the apostle, "Nevertheless not me, but the grace of God that is in me." Yet ought it never to be forgotten, that generally it is by the result of the visitation, and not by any sensible circumstances attendant upon the time of it, that we come to know whether the Spirit of God be really in us or not. It hinges on the question, whether we are like unto God or like unto Christ, who is His image, and was His sensible representative in the world; and thus the most direct way of settling the enquiry, is to compare our character with that of the Saviour—our history with the history and doings of Christ upon earth.

And yet at present we should not like to discourage any, from their intended approach to H

sacrament,[1] because of the width and magnitude of that actual dissimilarity, which obtains between their Saviour and themselves. They cannot dare to affirm, that they have yet grown up unto the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. They perhaps are nought but humbled and abashed—when they compare their own attainments of patience, and piety, and unwearied beneficence, with those of that high and heavenly exemplar, who is set before them in the gospel. They could not venture to sit down and participate in the coming festival, if the question turned on such a family likeness between them and the Master of the entertainment, as would mark them to be children of the same God, and members of the same spiritual brotherhood; and therefore let us assure them, that their right to place themselves at the table of the Lord, is not an argument of degree as to their actual progress in the divine life, but a question of principle as to their aims and their desires after it. Do they hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do they look unto Christ, not merely for the purpose of confidence, but also for the purpose of imitation? Is it the honest aspiration of their souls, under all the helplessness they feel, and the burden of those deficiencies over which they mourn and are in heaviness—that they might indeed be visited by a more copious descent of the Spirit's influence, and so attain a higher conformity to the image of the Saviour. Then sure, as we are, that Christ would not have spurned them from His presence, had He still been sojourning amongst us in the world—

[1] Delivered shortly before the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

neither can we interdict the approaches of such unto the Saviour, through one of His own bidden and appointed ordinances. The Sacrament we hold to be not merely a privilege, but a means of grace — a privilege to all, who choose the Saviour as their alone dependence for time and for eternity; and a means of grace to all, who, humbled at their distance and deficiency from the perfections of the sanctuary above, seek to the instituted ordinances of the scene of preparation below, for the advancement of their meetness for the inheritance. Even for that very Spirit, the presence of which you long to ascertain, I would bid you come to this place of meeting; and see whether the blessing will not be shed forth upon you. Turn unto me, saith God, and I will pour out my Spirit. And sure we are, that there is not a likelier attitude for receiving the full and the free supplies of it, than when you look in faith to the consecrated symbols of that atonement, through which alone it is that a sinner may draw nigh—and over which alone it is, that a holy God can rejoice over you. Come—but come with a sincere purpose. Come in honesty. Come aware of the total renovation which your personal Christianity implies. Come free of all those superficial and meagre conceptions of it, which are so current in the midst of this really infidel world. Come resolved to be and to do all that the Master of that assembly would have you; and look unto Him for the perfection of His own work upon your character, that in you He may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

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